Why the Government Can Stop Hackers—but Doesn't

THE NEW REPUBLIC

Perot's Putsch
Ryan Lizza

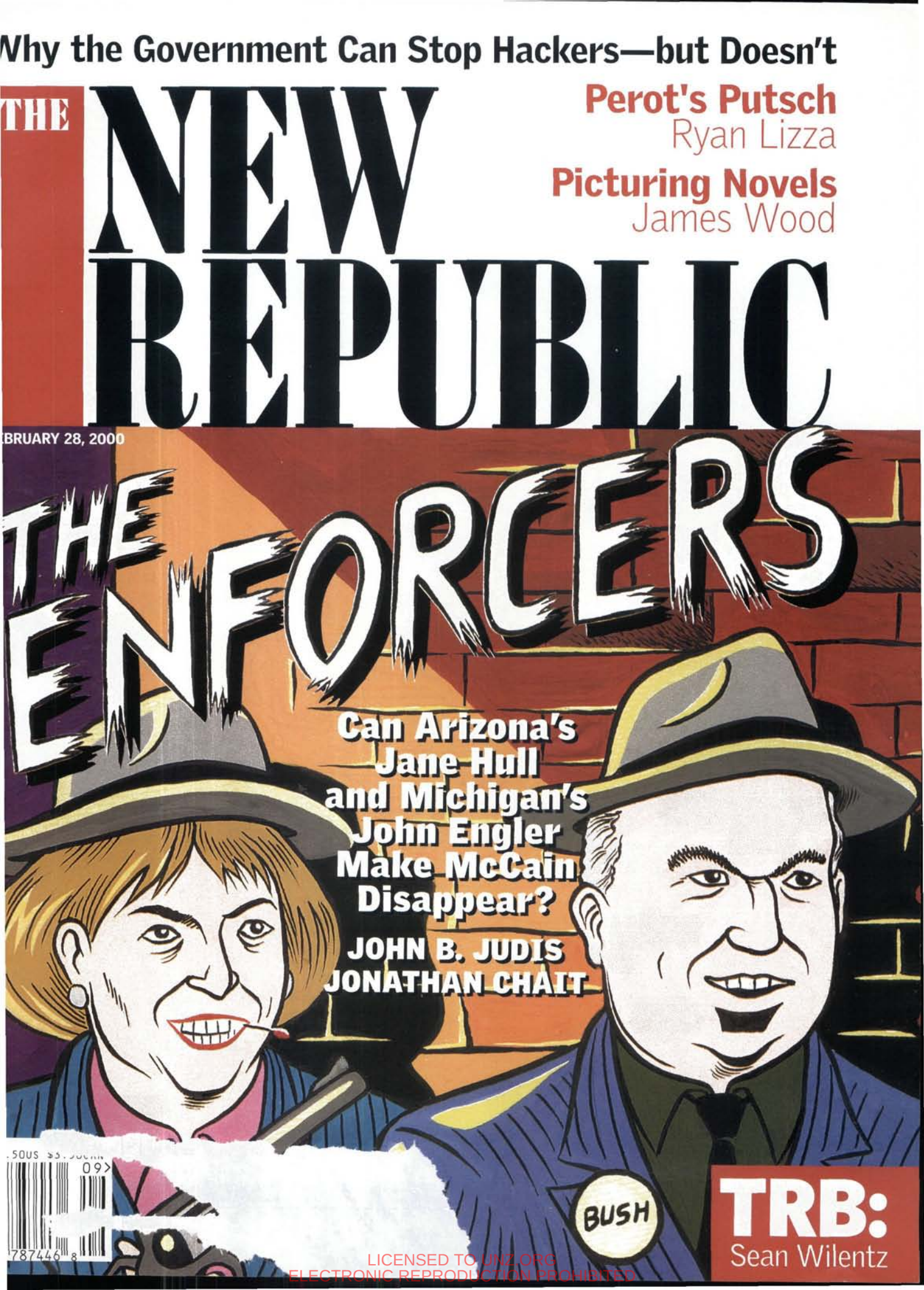
Picturing Novels
James Wood

EBRUARY 28, 2000

THE ENFORCERS

Can Arizona's Jane Hull and Michigan's John Engler Make McCain Disappear?

JOHN B. JUDIS
JONATHAN CHAIT



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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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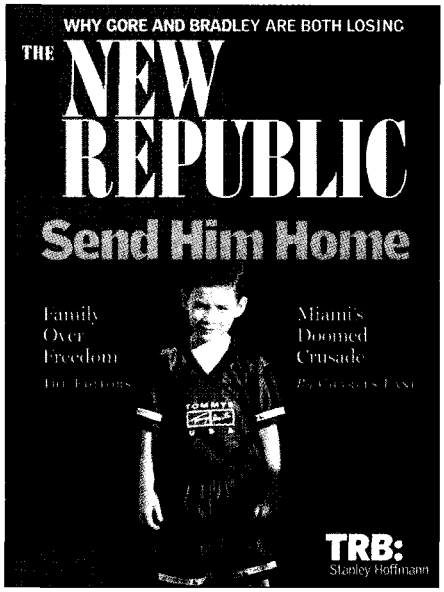
Spirit of St. Louis?

TO THE EDITORS:

In your January 24 editorial, "Father Knows Best," you are probably right to call for the return of Elián González to his father, although it is not clear why you call those Republicans who disagree with you demagogues (other than the fact that they disagree with you). There are, however, two matters worth considering. You rightly say of the boy's father that "no one living in a country like Cuba can truly speak freely." Then why not insist that Elián's father make his claim on American soil? (We could offer to fly him here at our expense.) Secondly, why not take this opportunity to remind Cuba of the failure of the Castro regime to allow the children of those who fled to America, leaving their families behind, to be reunited with their parents? If the policy is parental rights before politics, why should we not insist that it be applied to both situations? If our government is reluctant to get involved, then perhaps the leaders of the National Council of Churches who have stepped in to defend the interests and point of view



of a dictator in a conflict with the United States might demonstrate some moral consistency by publicly calling on the Castro government to return these children to their parents.

LARRY D. NACHMAN
Professor of Political Science
College of Staten Island, CUNY
Staten Island, New York

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TO THE EDITORS:

Sixty years ago, another incident involving Cuba and refugees occurred: refugees from Nazi Germany aboard the *S.S. St. Louis*, having been refused permission to land in Cuba (despite the fact that some of them had entry visas), appealed to President Franklin D. Roosevelt for asylum. Roosevelt refused, thus condemning the refugees to return to Nazi tyranny. His decision cost many of the passengers their lives. While Elián González probably does not face the threat of death if he is returned to Cuba, no one in this country truly knows what his life would be like there—certainly not the National Council of Churches or its supporters.

FDR clearly demonstrated that he could be very selective when it came to freedom from tyranny. I hope that President Clinton does not show the same selectivity.

DORON BECKER
Potomac, Maryland

Television views

TO THE EDITORS:

I enjoyed Tamar Jacoby's article showing the role that market segmentation plays in creating prime-time segregation ("Adjust Your Sets," January 24). But she is wrong to say that "there are more black actors on CBS, ABC, NBC, and Fox today than ever before." My ongoing studies of fictional prime-time TV series confirm that the current numbers are indeed roughly "proportionate to the percentage of blacks in the population." But in the past they have been even higher, peaking at 17 percent—one out of every six prime-time characters—during the 1992–1993 season. Jacoby is right about the underrepresentation of Hispanic characters, though; they have been mired at about the two percent level for decades.

S. ROBERT LICHTER
President
Center for Media and Public Affairs
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITORS:

Tamar Jacoby's otherwise excellent article on segregated television states that in 1998 A. Jerrold Perenchio, owner of the Spanish-language Univision TV network, spent several million dollars to defeat Proposition 227 in California, which aimed to dismantle bilingual education and required that Latino children be taught English in school. Perenchio, a Republican billionaire who is not Latino and does not speak Spanish, did indeed donate $1.5 million to the "No on 227" campaign as well as cover the cost of

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countless Spanish-language "advertorials" on his own stations, urging his Latino viewers to oppose Prop 227. Furthermore, he simultaneously became one of the top individual donors to the three leading candidates for governor, Democrats Gray Davis and Jane Harman and Republican Dan Lungren, splitting half a million dollars among them and, perhaps coincidentally, persuading those same gubernatorial candidates to star in his TV ads. Largely because of Perenchio's financial involvement, the "No on 227" campaign outspent the "Yes" side in advertising by a ratio of some 25 to one.

Fortunately, Prop 227 nonetheless won by a landslide of 61 percent, a larger victory margin than nearly any other contested California initiative in 20 years, even though Perenchio's massive advertising campaign did manage to drive Latino support for it down from above 60 percent to below 40 percent.

RON UNZ
Chairman
English for the Children—Yes on 227
Palo Alto, California

TAMAR JACOBY REPLIES:
I defer to S. Robert Lichter's statistics, though they in no way change the argument at the center of my piece. Ron Unz usefully clarifies a sentence made cloudy and misleading by editing changes. Thanks to Unz's efforts—and despite A. Jerrold Perenchio's—Proposition 227 has already begun to transform the landscape in California: in contrast to the segregationist effects of Spanish-language television, the curriculum changes it mandates are enabling young Hispanics to learn English and make their way up the educational ladder into the cultural mainstream.

Apocalypse maybe

TO THE EDITORS:
James Wood has his fun with evangelical Christians who scheduled the apocalypse for January 1, 2000 ("Last Days," January 24). Fair enough. When Wood presses his case to mock Christian eschatology as a whole, however, it needs to be pointed out that many Christians are not "Technicolor literalists." Many biblical scholars have recognized that the "apocalyptic" language used by Israel's prophets and Jesus is a poetic form that describes historical catastrophes in terms that suggest cosmic collapse.

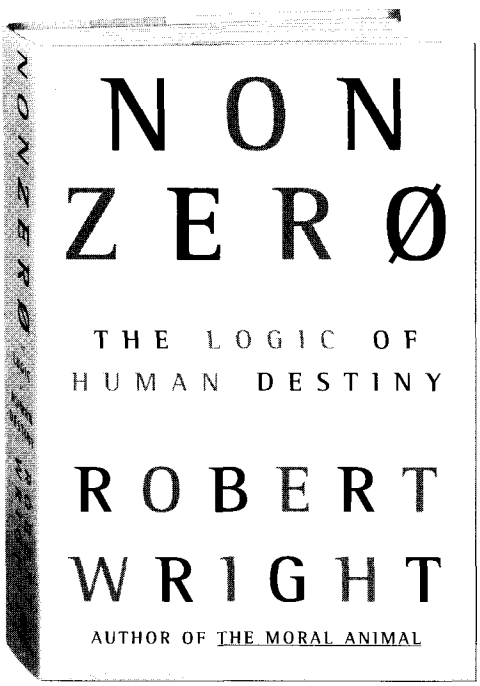
This means that much of what is taken as Scriptural evidence for "the End" is about something else entirely. Wood cites Isaiah 13:22 ("her time is near") and asks, "Who is Isaiah's dark lady?" A glance at the beginning of the chapter could have answered his question: Isaiah is writing "the oracle concerning Babylon" (13:1), which is destined to fall to the Medes (13:17). When Isaiah goes on to prophesy that "the sun will be dark when it rises," he cannot be refuted by astronomy because he is not making astronomical predictions; he is saying that Babylon's sky is falling. When Jesus quotes Isaiah in his own apocalyptic oracle, he is predicting not the collapse of the solar system but the fall of a new Babylon.

Belief in a future resurrection and judgment remains, of course, a fundamental conviction of orthodox Christians. Wood notwithstanding, this does not imply any deficiency in Jesus' first ministry, but means that God, like any good storyteller, intends to bring his narrative to closure. Brilliant critic that he is, it is surprising that Wood should find this such a "strange notion."

PETER J. LEITHART
Fellow of Theology and Literature
New St. Andrews College
Moscow, Idaho

"A COMPELLING SYNTHESIS ...
Wright is right about so many things: evolution is seeded with inevitabilities, cultures have common trajectories, and human history has seen great hopes and terrible crimes but is capable of achieving a final destiny."

—Simon Conway Morris,
***The New York Times Book Review*, lead review**



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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Yawn

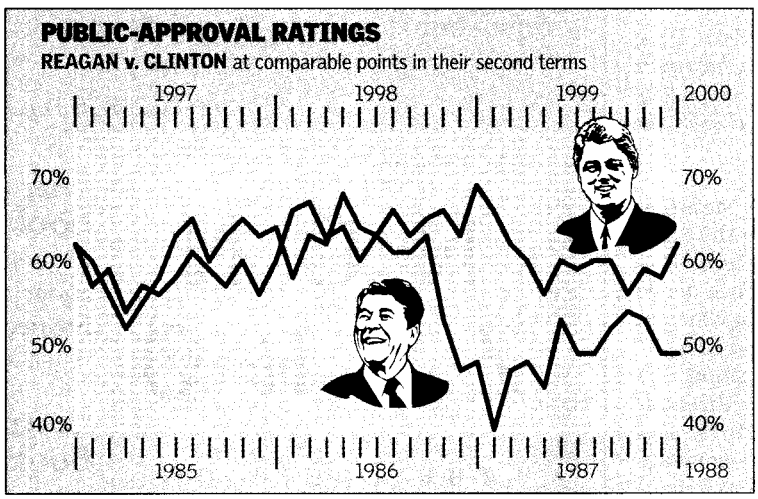
ACCORDING TO MANY of our top editorialists, the nation is gripped by something called "Clinton fatigue." After seven long years, voters are fed up with our "truth-twisting" president (the phrase is John McCain's), and they can't wait for him to clear out of Washington. It is this lingering distaste, the pundits argue, that explains the dynamics of the 2000 presidential race. As an antidote to Bill Clinton, voters want character; they want straight talk; they are sick of politics as usual. This accounted for Bill Bradley's surge last fall, and it now accounts for McCain's even more remarkable rise over the past two weeks.

The model has an elegant simplicity. But it rests on a fictional premise. By every meaningful standard, statistical and historical, Clinton fatigue is an utter hoax. It is the latest sign of the growing gap between what the public actually thinks and what the pundits claim the public thinks. In fact, over time, Clinton has become more popular, not less. That so many intelligent writers assume the opposite tells us exactly nothing about Clinton. It tells us a great deal, however, about the dogma-cursed state of American political commentary.

From 1945 to 1992, each American president saw his job-approval ratings drop during his final years in office. The Korean War so undermined Harry Truman's popularity that he decided not to run for reelection in 1952. Vietnam did the same for Lyndon Johnson in 1968. Wretched disapproval (and almost-certain impeachment) led Richard Nixon to resign in 1974. Stagflation, the Iran hostage crisis, and "malaise" sent Jimmy Carter's numbers tumbling before Ronald Reagan clobbered him in 1980. Reagan's popular support went into free fall during the Iran-Contra scandal and never really recovered. George Bush, prior to his defeat in 1992, saw his approval ratings plunge from their peak just after the Gulf war. Even the likable Dwight Eisenhower saw his ratings slip sharply during his sluggish second term.

Clinton is the great exception. After hovering in the mid-50s during the months after his reelection, his approval ratings have averaged in the low to mid-60s ever since—reaching 69 percent at the height of the impeachment crisis and never dipping below 56 percent. By contrast, Ronald Reagan's numbers plummeted from 63 percent in October 1986 to 40 percent in February 1987 and then were barely nudged above the halfway mark until after the 1988 elections.

Commentators are quick to note that Clinton's approval ratings drop abruptly when the question turns from job performance to character. But poll data only matter insofar as they predict elections, and, when it comes to elections, Clinton's high job-approval numbers are far more predictive than his low personal-approval ones. And, like the job-approval numbers, the trend at the polls has generally been up.



Sources: Gallup Poll; Wash. Post-ABC; NBC-WSJ; ABC, WSJ; NY Times-CBS; Newsweek. CHART BY NIGEL HOLMES

Clinton has now been the dominant figure in four national elections. In 1992, he won the presidency, in a three-way race, with 43 percent of the popular vote. In 1994, of course, the Gingrich Republicans routed the president and his party, turning a large Democratic congressional majority into a GOP majority. But two years later Clinton not only rebounded from 1994 but surpassed his showing in 1992, winning 49 percent of the popular vote in another three-way race. In 1998, against media predictions, he did even better, and the Democrats gained five seats in the House. The last time a second-term president's party did so well in an off-year election was 1822.

Now consider 2000. Last fall, the press was filled with suggestions that Clinton fatigue was killing Al Gore. But last fall, if you'll remember, Gore was frantically distancing himself from the president—telling every interviewer who would listen how much he disapproved of Clinton's behavior and engaging in elaborate rhetorical contortions to avoid mentioning the president's name on the stump. Since December, he has started forthrightly claiming credit for the Clinton administration's accomplishments, and he has soared, winning in both Iowa and New Hampshire. To be sure, part of Gore's success stems from his campaign shake-up and from Bradley's early timidity. And, to be sure, Democratic primary voters are the least Clinton-fatigued people around. But the fact remains that, at the ballot box as in the job-approval ratings, evidence for Clinton fatigue is scarce. Even McCain, whose recent rise pundits credit to his anti-Slick-Willie persona, beat George W. Bush in New Hampshire with a tax plan that his opponents ridiculed (and that he at one point acknowledged) as Clintonian.

Why, then, does Clinton fatigue get so much press? Because today's commentators are afflicted with two types of denial. On the right, there is negative denial, a stubborn refusal to concede Clinton's success in bringing about the GOP's current disarray. On the left, there is positive denial, characterized by absolutist assertions of outmoded doctrine coupled with distortions of Clinton's record. Negative denial helps explain conservative pundits' sudden enthusiasm for McCain as the "un-Clinton." Positive denial helps explain leftist pundits' enthusiasm for the inert Bradley.

Though distinct, these two types of anti-Clinton denial have much in common. In both instances, political frustration breeds political self-delusion. In both instances, normally shrewd analysts ridicule a president who has proven their nostrums wrong. In both instances, the experts, having persuaded themselves that Clinton fatigue truly exists, attempt to pass the fraud off on a resistant public. And, most remarkably, in both instances, the fraud gets perpetrated not merely by the usual gang of talk-radio demagogues and cable-TV blowhards but by some of the ablest intellectuals and editors in the land. Who these intellectuals are, how they operate, and what the Clinton-fatigue fraud portends for the future will be the subjects of next week's TRB.

SEAN WILENTZ

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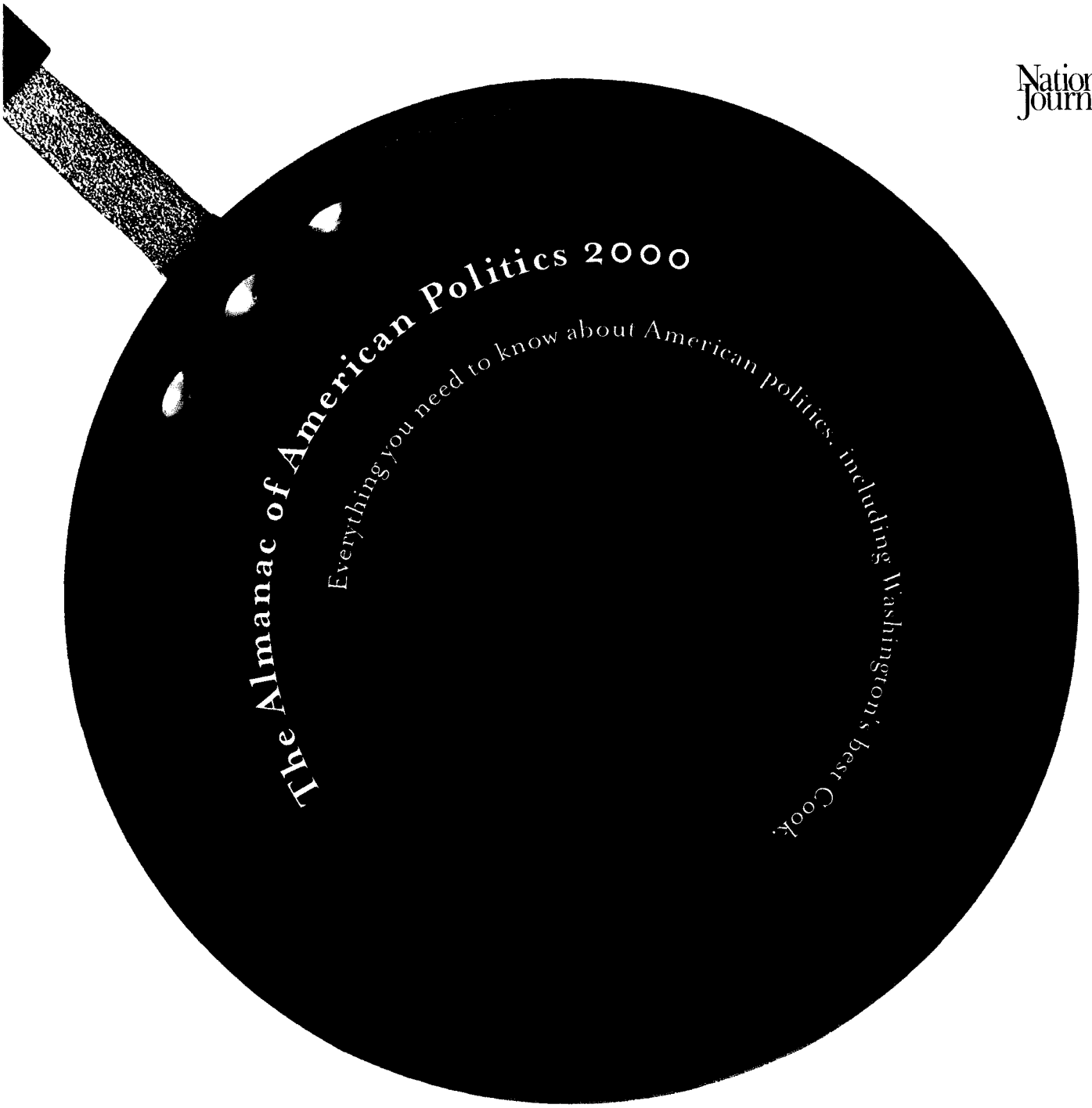
National Journal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In a bold move that revealed their true colors, The Coalition For Higher Mortgage Costs, on December 15, 1999, sent a letter to the government with a simple message: Please get these consumer-friendly products outlawed. Stop Fannie Mae from lowering consumer costs for those with low and moderate incomes, minorities, and the underserved.

Oh, they don't call themselves The Coalition For Higher Mortgage Costs. They call themselves names like the Consumer Mortgage Coalition and the National Home Equity Mortgage Association. And what they say they want is more "competition."

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Genes Out of the Bottle

GENETIC ENGINEERING is beginning in earnest—and so are its dangers. A basically healthy 18-year-old dies at the University of Pennsylvania Hospital after volunteering in a gene-therapy test. Children with brain cancer at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis are exposed to genetically engineered material that may contain the viruses that cause AIDS and hepatitis C.

This is no reason to give up on biotech research. After all, horrible things happen in conventional medicine, too. But these problems should make us rethink the way we regulate DNA manipulation—or, more precisely, the fact that we barely regulate it. Although the use of genetic engineering is increasing exponentially, Congress has enacted no governing statutes. The president has proposed no comprehensive regulatory approach, and there is no federal agency with clear jurisdiction. Washington seems paralyzed by an odd mix of conservatives who want genetic engineering to be unregulated, left-wingers who want it to be banned, and establishment types who find the whole subject so confusing that they stick to platitudes. But Washington's current nonsystem is a formula for front-page mistakes, deteriorating public confidence, and a potential backlash against valuable science.

One problem is that, while federally funded research is generally governed by National Institutes of Health guidelines, private-sector experiments generally are not. One reason fertility clinics are doing such a brisk business is that private physicians and researchers can put human DNA into petri dishes and do almost anything with it. Congress requires that researchers who accept federal grants (which means almost all university-based biologists) cannot experiment on human embryos or on "stem cells" cultured from such embryos. But it allows private-sector docs to tinker with embryos however they wish. Animal cloning follows the same dodge: as long as you're using private funds, you can do pretty much whatever you please to the livestock gene pool. In a convoluted case last fall, government lawyers ruled that federally funded researchers could begin to experiment on human embryonic cells, but only if the embryos themselves originated in the private sector. That's absurd. Such experimentation is either right or wrong; who funds it is morally irrelevant.

Then there is genetic therapy—the replacement of defective DNA with normal genes that could cure, in theory, conditions like cystic fibrosis and sickle-cell anemia. In practice, all attempts at genetic cures have failed, and the weakened viruses scientists use to carry new genes have sometimes harmed the patients they are supposed to be curing. Genetic-therapy boosters speak of amazing cures waiting just around the corner, and, in fairness, breakthroughs may be near. But doctors suspect that some gene researchers, frustrated by their inability to make the big advance, are taking too many chances. And that may be part of what happened at the University of Pennsylvania.

Sometimes gene-therapy experiments require NIH approval. Sometimes Food and Drug Administration approval is required. Hospitals and laboratories have "institutional review boards" that examine plans for genetic trials. But such review boards vary from hospital to hospital. They do not abide by any clearly articulated legal standard—except for their members' sense of professionalism and fear of litigation. This creates bizarre incentives: Gene-therapy researchers complain that it is sometimes easier to get permission to inject experimental genetic substances into people than into monkeys or chimpanzees, because, perversely enough, animal-rights protesters are more likely than relatives of the dead to incite controversy and bad publicity.

As the research races haphazardly forward, Washington continues to dither. In 1995, President Clinton convened a National Bioethics Advisory Commission, which has acted like, well, a presidential commission. It ponderously grinds out "on the one hand . . . on the other hand" paper flow, which mainly rationalizes indecision.

This is simply not acceptable. We are much closer to cloning humans than most people realize, and our elected representatives have not even begun a serious debate on how to respond. Establishing a coherent regulatory system for today's biotechnology could be a valuable dry run for regulating the much more explosive cloning technology in our future.

A recent four-color ad in the technical journal *Science* offers, "Need enzymes? Order on-line." Says another fancy promo: "Clone your gene in five minutes, recombine it into as many expression vectors as you want, and get the expression results you need." Business, medicine, and the market are rushing toward the genome. It is time Washington stopped pretending not to know. ■

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NOTEBOOK

SCANDALIZED: Since it opened in 1993, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has negotiated the tension between parochialism and universalism with admirable aplomb. Its directors have, so far, resisted the temptation to dedicate the museum entirely to the horrors of the Holocaust. They have also resisted transforming it into a generalized memorial for human suffering everywhere—a sort of "bad things people do to one another" museum. This balance has required constant vigilance. Lately, however, that vigilance has slacked. On February 13, the museum hosted an event, titled "Scandalize My Name," featuring a documentary on the blacklisting of African American actors and performers after World War II. The screening was followed by remarks from the documentary's creator, Alexandra Isles, and from one of the key figures Isles interviewed, Harry Belafonte. Held in honor of Black History Month, "Scandalize My Name" was sponsored by the museum's Equal Employment Opportunity office—the division in each federal institution that ensures that staff members enjoy a nondiscriminatory work environment. Had this event—which featured an excellent documentary and a stirring indictment of McCarthyism—taken place at one of Washington's many other museums, it would have been both entertaining and important. But not at the Holocaust Museum. The damage done by the blacklist to the careers of talented men and women like Canada Lee is an American tragedy, but it is a very different sort of tragedy from the Holocaust. Part of a commitment to memory is a sense of proportion, and to lend out the Holocaust as a sort of brand name to other, less severe forms of suffering trivializes genocide. Simultaneously, by forcing it into an analogy it cannot withstand, it diminishes the blacklist's historical meaning as well. Of course, this is not to say that the Holocaust Museum should reject comparisons completely. When the 400 or so people attending the blacklist event left the auditorium, they were confronted with photographs from Bosnia and Rwanda, images of twisted corpses that mocked the world's solemn pledge "Never again." Some analogies help us remember, and others help us forget.

WHO COULD HAVE PREDICTED?: In our editorial on the America Online–Time Warner merger ("Crossing Lines," January 31), we called on the Federal Communications Commission to require all cable companies to give Internet providers full and equal access to their cable lines. Under current law, cable companies can dictate which Internet providers use their lines—lines that are necessary for high-speed, broadband Internet access. Our case was based less on the current situation than on our concerns about the near future. Until the merger, AOL had been one of the most forceful advocates for open access to cable lines; the company had spent millions lobbying state legislators across the country to pass open-access laws. But, as we noted, the incentive for such advocacy vanished with the merger. By purchasing Time Warner, AOL acquired the second-largest cable company in America—and access to 20 percent of the nation's cable lines. While AOL executives made reassuring statements about how they'd continue their open-access fight, we didn't believe them. And, sure enough, on February 12 *The Washington Post* reported that AOL recently took no position as two open-access measures died in the state legislature in Virginia, its home state. "We have come to the view that the most effective and expeditious way of getting to open access throughout the cable industry is to just go do it," AOL General Counsel George Vradenburg III told the *Post*. Why keep upholding a principle you've endlessly declared sacred once it no longer serves the bottom line?

HMO REFORMER WITHOUT RESULTS: George W. Bush claims that he, not John McCain, is the true "reformer" in the Republican presidential race. In a TV ad currently airing in South Carolina, Bush boasts, "I'm a leader and reformer who gets results.... While Washington politicians deadlocked, I delivered a patients' bill of rights." This claim about HMO reform has, in fact, become boilerplate in Bush speeches. There's just one problem: It's grossly misleading. When the Texas legislature first considered patient-protection legislation in 1995, Bush *opposed* it—either because he truly believed it would drive up health care costs or because he was simply kowtowing to the insurance and business lobbies. According to one patient-protection advocate, Bush actually dispatched a member of his staff to the Texas legislature with the HMO bill in one hand and a rubber "veto" stamp in the other, just to make sure his intentions were clear. "They put tremendous pressure on the bill's sponsors and everybody to kill the bill," the advocate recalls. The tactic failed: The legislature passed the bill anyway. Bush vetoed it, then tried to make amends with voters by asking his insurance commissioner to issue his own regulations. But these regulations were so inadequate that, two years later, the Texas legislature revisited the issue. This time, one of Bush's fellow Republicans sponsored the bill. And it passed with a veto-proof majority. Bush, realizing he was licked, didn't wield the veto stamp. But he let the measure's strongest parts—like the right to sue—pass into law without his signature—which, in Texas government, is the equivalent of passing them under protest. "Patients' rights were adopted," says Ron Pollack, whose group, Families USA, has spearheaded the patient-protection movement nationwide, "but it was despite Governor Bush, not because of him." Did we mention the Bush campaign's title for the new advertisement? It's called "Integrity."

SOUTHERN CROSS: Next to the stories that John McCain is an agent for the Vietnamese, it's the great conspiracy theory of this presidential campaign. According to George W. Bush and his supporters, Democrats are cynically using open primaries—in which voters are permitted to cross party lines and which 26 states currently hold—to vote for McCain in an attempt to weaken the GOP come November. Pat Robertson, founder of the Christian Coalition and a staunch Bush ally, recently griped that "people who are allied with Al Gore are

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indeed making telephone calls to try to encourage Democrats to vote in the Republican primary.... I think that they consider [McCain] a weaker candidate than Governor Bush." But, if these open primaries are now the bane of the GOP establishment, the bane is one of their own making. Take South Carolina, a state with an open primary, and ground zero for the conspiracy theory. In 1980, the state Republican Party decided that the best way to expand the state GOP was to create a "presidential-preference poll" in which anyone could vote for Republican presidential candidates. Prior to this, the state party awarded its delegates to presidential candidates at a closed-door convention—not a very good way to let Republican candidates court voters who might turn out in November. Hence the 1980 switch to the open primary. "The thinking," explains J. Sam Daniels, executive director of South Carolina's Republican Party, "was that we would expand the ranks of the party." That same year, Republicans in Alabama, Georgia, Texas, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Mississippi also adopted open primaries. And the new strategy proved quite successful in strengthening the GOP throughout the South: in 1980 Republicans held 17 percent of state-legislature seats in the region; by 1998 they held more than 40 percent. We wonder what percentage of those state legislators subscribe to the Bush conspiracy theory.

MOVEMENT POLITICS: Catherine Elton's article on the indigenous movement in Ecuador ("Jungle Fever," February 7) referred to the movement as Pachakutik. Pachakutik, however, is the name of a political group that represents only one faction of the movement. Neither the protests in January nor the provincial parliaments mentioned in the article were organized by Pachakutik, but rather by a larger coalition of indigenous organizations.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE: With this issue we introduce "Dear Village," Douglas McGrath's fictional take on the presidential campaign. Longtime readers will remember McGrath's "Shrub File" and "Flapjack File" from the early '90s. We're pleased to have him back in our pages, just as another shrub takes root. ■

VINT'S WEEK

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Dear Village Boris?

By Douglas McGrath

Dear village,

It is I, Fyodor Pashenko, son of Vladimir Pashenko, chairman of Young Russians for a Perfect Tomorrow. I have arrived in America on the great quest for which you have all given money: to study the U.S. elections so we can learn better how to conduct our own experiment with democracy.

To begin, I went to South Carolina, where a bitter primary is being waged. As a Russian, I am at home with tragedy, so I started with George W. Bush.

I called his campaign headquarters, and a mechanical voice answered the phone. "Hello, you've reached the South Carolina headquarters of George W. Bush, governor of Texas, son of the former president, grandson of the former senator, brother of the governor of Florida, and a political outsider. To hear our latest endorsements, press one. If you are responding to our ad for geography tutors, press two. If you would like to make a campaign contribution and help us break $100 million in our quest to bring honor back to a White House dirtied by fund-raising scandals, press three. If you are a lobbyist who jumped on board last summer and now want your campaign contribution back, please write a ten-page, single-spaced letter listing your reasons and send it to P.O. Box 000, Bermuda Triangle. If your name is Carlos and you have a 'delivery' for the governor, call him on his beeper—you've got the number. If you're calling about our 'Chug One for Jesus!' beer mugs, press four. To hear the candidate ask directly for your vote, which was something he forgot to do in New Hampshire, press five." I pressed five.

Before I knew it, I was talking to Mr. Bush. But not the governor, dear village—his father, the former president! And it was at that point, I must confess, that I wished we could have afforded to send along an interpreter. "Good to chat with you there, Fyo-yo," said the former president. "Just yanked up the old Don Ameche here to help my boy out. The anti-dynasty handwringers in the press said I gotta stop forefronting around out there, said Bar and I were dragging him down, but no down-draggers we." When I told him I was from Russia and wanted to meet his son, he said, "We Bushes are always glad to lend a helping 'h' to a Chicken Kiever. Just ask the Gorbster or old Bobo Yeltsin, if you can pry his lips off the Smirnoff snifter."

So I went to the headquarters of George W. Bush. And I must say, dear village, he is a very nice man. I said my name was Fyodor, and he said, "Happy to have you watch me there, Fido. But let the warning go out: Governor George W. Bush is a new man. Made mistakes, trying to learn. Capital of England: London. Didn't know that a few months ago, *on top of it now*. Taking nothing for granted. In New Hampshire, we acted entitled to the votes, and, when the voters got in that little *Wizard of Oz* booth where they vote, they clobbered me in the head with their lacrosse sticks. So in South Carolina we're asking for their votes. Gotta earn what they didn't give me, and you know what? I'm out there getting de-smirked and just loving it, telling people the truth, saying, 'Jesus and I are playing California doubles with the devil, and we're going to ace his ass!' But with dignity. That's important. After what Clinton put us through, it's all about dignity. Hey, way to go there, Rover!" he called to a campaign official who was kneeling in front of a beer keg. "Chug that mother!"

I asked him how he felt about his opponent, Senator John McCain. "Good Q for me there, Foot Odor, and here's the A: Old Johnny Mac is a super guy. I'd play blow-pong with him any day of the week. But he's getting a free cruise on the media love boat, and it's time it stopped. War hero? What are they talking about? For the six months I was in the National Guard, I had to be on standby every other weekend, two of which fell *in football season*. Nobody writes about that. Meanwhile, I read that old Johnny Mac spent the entire Vietnam War in a Hilton! I'm not much of a reader, so I may have some of the facts a little wrong, but it was definitely a hotel. I feel so strongly about this that I am going to make sure this little detail gets directly to the American people, through a third party that can't be traced back to me."

Then, dear village, a most thrilling thing happened: I thought I saw former President Yeltsin walk by. But something was wrong. Yeltsin doesn't wear a red-and-white polka-dot dress with a pork chop sticking out of the pocket. Furthermore, I've never seen him walk a straight line. But then I realized my mistake: It was the governor's mother, Barbara Bush. She was carrying a red-hot branding iron. "Isn't Mom super?" the governor asked, little proud tears forming in the corners of his eyes. "She loves to initiate the new volunteers."

I asked him what was the most important thing he had learned so far in the election. "Well, Footsie," he said, "I guess it's that, despite my endorsements from over 200 prominent Americans and my—let's face it—amazing bloodlines, I will only get my own set of keys to old 1600 Pennsylvania Street if the American people want me. That's why I've thrown off the handlers. As Dad says, I'm a boy of the people. I'm just two-term Governor Outsider now."

A door flew open and the volunteers came charging out. Mrs. Bush snapped a whip above her head and said, "Now get to that phone bank and start push-polling!"

There is much I don't understand, dear village, about America. But I shall try. I so fervidly believe Russia can learn to be a great nation again! I long for the cultural and political influence we once had, when people recognized the sensitive artistry of the Russian intellect while at the same time being scared out of their wits if we invaded their country. America has the momentum now, but we can learn. We can come back bigger than ever. After all, we were not just a bear. We were a bear that typed *Doctor Zhivago*. ■

Douglas McGrath is a writer in New York.

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Yahoo! for government regulation.

Federal Reserve

By JOHN SIMONS

STOCK TRADERS SELLING short. Bored kids. Anti-capitalist terrorists. Any of these could be responsible for the recent hack attacks that hobbled Yahoo!, Buy.com, E*Trade, and other commercial websites. But last week the hard-core techies who post messages on the website of *Slashdot* magazine were fingering a different suspect: the federal government. "Is it paranoid to note," asked one, "that we're being hit with unprecedented attacks, *with no known motive*, at the same time as the government is pushing for yet another expansion of their surveillance powers?"

Well, yes, it is paranoid. While it's true that the attacks began just a day after the White House requested $37 million to help the Justice Department fight cybercrime, the government hardly needed a string of hacks to make its case. It's no secret that the FBI's cybercrime team lacks the staff to deal with the nearly 900 computer-crime cases now pending. And even a beefed-up FBI won't be enough. In fact—cyberanarchists, close your ears—the government could do much more to protect cyberspace. But, so far, it won't.

The computer break-ins were relatively simple to execute. Hackers merely zeroed in on large, powerful computers that stay connected to the Internet constantly—servers that operate networks at large research universities, for example. Then, exploiting flaws in the software that keeps these computers operating, the hackers essentially hijacked them. They used the computers to hurl huge packets of data at their targets, deluging them and effectively shutting them down. By staging the attacks through unwitting third-party computers, the hackers managed to keep their own identities concealed.

The most obvious way to protect computer systems from being commandeered in this way is "encryption": in effect, you make your computer code so difficult to decipher that it's impossible to hack into it. But the government guards encryption technology jealously, because anything sophisticated enough to keep out hackers would also keep out spies from the FBI or the CIA. Late last year, the Clinton administration relaxed some regulations on the export of encryption technology. But, because they waited so long, many sites still haven't yet begun using the technology. What's more, some regulations still stand—which is why many engineers blame the White House for the recent troubles. "The breaking into zombie computers may very well have been stopped if encryption had been more widely deployed," says Perry Metzger, an Internet security consultant and member of the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), a loosely organized, private international body with some 200 members. Regarding the larger security picture: "The effects of [export] liberalization are going to take two or three years. It's a little late now."

IN ANY EVENT, simply loosening the shackles on encryption technology would not guarantee that administrators of large computer networks would adopt it. And, since even a few large, unprotected systems expose the entire Internet to hacks, somebody must see to it that encryption gets used. This is where government comes in. It should set safety standards for the Internet much like its safety standards for the auto and airline industries. "The companies will never do it," says Jeff Schiller, network manager at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and area codirector for security at IETF. "We have seatbelts in cars because the government mandated them, not because companies thought they were a great idea."

It's true that the Internet is harder to regulate than Ford. But it's not completely intractable. Consider the success of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). A nonprofit group with international representation, ICANN was created by the Commerce Department to introduce competition into the market for Internet addresses. Previously, one company—Network Solutions, Inc.—had a monopoly on assigning domain names. Thanks to ICANN, 27 competitors now vie for that business. "If the U.S. government can come up with something that makes sense, great," says Don Heath, president of the Internet Society, a nonprofit international group that studies the Internet and government policy. "It's wrong to think that the informal arrangements that made the Internet a success until now are going to be the same things that will drive the Internet in the future."

Indeed, the administration's best move right now might be to transform the IETF into a more formal body—one that sets technical and security standards and makes certain all the Internet's interconnected networks abide by its rules of conduct. IETF, which does most of its work via e-mail and holds meetings three times a year, grew out of the Internet's academic beginnings and has no real enforcement power. Yet, since 1986, its members—the majority of whom are Americans—have shaped major international decisions on how computers communicate across networks. Think what it could do with a more formalized role.

Some deregulation is also important, starting with the antitrust laws that forbid companies from sharing information about business practices. But, like any other system of cooperative security, the Internet will work best with an effective police force—and only government can create it. That isn't what the cyberanarchists and their libertarian backers in Washington want to hear. But, given the very real threat hackers pose, paranoia is an indulgence we can ill afford. ■

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Baton Rouge Dispatch

Flushed

By Carol Flake Chapman

When I arrived in Baton Rouge to watch the opening scenes of the long-running drama known as *USA* v. *Edwin Edwards*, I felt I was viewing a ritual almost as familiar as Mardi Gras. Edwards on trial is like Carnival: an elaborate parade of charges, a kind of ball wherein the former governor dances around the evidence, leading to a sort of final unmasking when Edwards reveals himself as the invincible Cajun Prince, the charming rogue too cunning to be convicted.

This time, however, folks in Louisiana predicted that the four-term governor's age, as much as his cunning, would facilitate his escape from the government's clutches. "They ought to let him off with a fine," a man at a tourist office told me when I stopped to pick up a map. "If they couldn't get him while he was governor, they shouldn't be going after him while he's an old coot." But it is hard to picture the debonair Edwards as a doddering geezer. With his trim figure and his dapper suits, Edwards looks much younger than his 72 years. Maybe it's his wife, Candy, 37 years his junior, who keeps him so frisky.

Still, at least at first, Edwards did seem to play up the "sympathy for your elders" angle. In the days before the trial, during jury selection, he looked pale and unsteady—apparently the result of the flu, for which he was briefly hospitalized. But by the first day of the actual trial Edwards seemed his old, slick self, aglow with charisma and brimming with flirtatious humor. When I passed him on the way out of the courtroom, he complimented me on my outfit. "I really like that red sweater," he practically cooed.

His fellow defendants, however, weren't nearly so jaunty—and with good reason. Edwards, his son, Stephen, and five of their cronies have been charged with more than 30 counts of racketeering, extortion, bribery, mail fraud, money laundering, and attempted wiretapping of an FBI agent. According to the prosecution, Edwards and his inner circle hatched a series of schemes that involved the awarding of gambling licenses, which were first introduced in Louisiana in 1992. The 93-page indictment, one defense lawyer quipped, is longer than a Stephen King novel. Edwards has joked that at least he hasn't been charged with the Oklahoma City bombing.

The large number of defendants—combined with the large team of prosecutors—made for an extremely crowded courtroom on the first day of the trial. Even the circus's star, Edwards, with his distinctive silver hair, wasn't easy to spot amid the sea of dark suits. His fellow defendants looked like a multicultural advertisement for equal-opportunity skulduggery: Stephen Edwards, a balding, unsmiling version of his father; Andrew Martin, a brooding, sullen-looking Cajun oilman; Bobby Johnson, a red-faced good-old-boy contractor; Ecotry Fuller, a distinguished-looking, black former school administrator; Cecil Brown, a cattleman sporting a black felt cowboy hat; and Greg Tarver, a black state senator from Shreveport.

The charges against the Bayou Seven are so complex and lengthy that the prosecutors have divided their case into seven "schemes," introducing the evidence regarding each scheme with a "mini-opening." And, if the evidence they laid out at the beginning of the trial is any indication of the "schemes" to come, the former governor may have finally met his match.

One of the prosecution's first witnesses, a tall, curly-haired man named Sid Moreland, told the court about what he saw during his stint as Edwards's executive assistant. Well, as one of Edwards's executive assistants. As Moreland testified, one day in 1992, during Edwards's fourth and final term as governor, he discovered that Martin also held that title. An old financial backer of Edwards's, Martin had fallen on hard times during the 1980s oil bust, and the governor had given him a job. According to Moreland, Martin's main duties were organizing the weekly high-stakes poker game at the governor's mansion and ushering in visitors who wanted to talk with Edwards about gambling licenses.

After Moreland testified, tugboat magnate Robert Guidry took the stand. He told of payoffs he had made to Edwards, his son, and Martin to obtain a gambling license. The scenarios Guidry described sounded like a cross between *Goodfellas* and the Marx Brothers. Guidry, who said he kept $1 million or so in cash at home—beneath his hot tub or in his gigantic freezer, under the turkey and duck carcasses—testified that he delivered one of his payments by tossing it out of the window of his Cadillac. Sometimes, when he wanted to express his displeasure with the shakedown, he'd leave payments in a Dumpster so that Martin would have to get his hands dirty.

The trial had its moments of humor and whimsy, but mostly it was sad, even pathetic. I wondered how on earth the people of Louisiana could have tolerated Edwards, whose career in state politics spanned nearly 50 years, and his way of doing business—once termed the "Louisiana way" by his codefendant Brown—for so long. The stories of corruption prosecutors told could have come from a Baptist preacher's Bible-thumping tirade against gambling. They portray a state permeated by graft and greed from the swamps to the high ground. In fact, the trial transcript should be required reading for any state considering the legalization of gambling.

Ironically, the casinos Edwards is alleged to have auctioned off to the highest bidders haven't been the bonanza everyone expected, particularly in New Orleans. One evening, after the trial was over for the day, I headed 90 miles east on Interstate 10 to the huge Harrah's casino in New

Carol Flake Chapman has written several books, including *Redemptorama* and *New Orleans*.

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Orleans. Conceived as the largest casino in the world, it became a white elephant, sitting unfinished near the foot of Canal Street for years after its owners declared bankruptcy. It finally opened last fall, but, after an initial flurry, business has slowed. The problem, it seems, is that gamblers haven't been losing enough money. In December, casino earnings were dented heavily by a high roller who won more than $1 million at the craps table.

As I stood among the half-empty tables, near a large Carnival float sporting gods and nymphs, trying to shut out the noise of Dixieland jazz blaring in the background, I couldn't help but think about Edwards, who kept winning all those years, even when his state was losing, its economy struggling and its educational system perpetually at the bottom of the national rankings. (Louisiana's only growth industry, one politico once remarked, is the FBI.) But all winning streaks must come to an end. And, for those tired of Edwards and the Louisiana way he represents, the odds may be improving. In craps, I learned, you can bet against the shooter—a wager known as a back-line bet. Although back-line bets can be risky, I'd make one against Edwards this time. In fact, I'd almost say it was a sure thing. ■

Tehran Dispatch

Age of Reform

By Geneive Abdo

It was three months before the February 18 parliamentary elections, but Iran's reformers were already worried. In November, conservatives sitting on a clerical court jailed progressive theologian Abdollah Nouri on charges of political and religious dissent. Nouri was to have headed the reformist Islamic Iran Participation Front's election slate and had been tapped to become speaker of parliament. Now he was out of the running. Then, as the election drew closer, 762 other hopefuls, most of them reformers allied with Iran's moderate president, Mohammad Khatami, were disqualified by the six hard-line clerics and six Islamic lawyers on the Guardian Council, the body charged with supervising elections and screening candidates.

But, despite these setbacks, the parliamentary elections, far from representing a return to the past, actually herald a new, more liberal era. When The New Republic went to press, Iran's voters had yet to go to the polls. But, regardless of the outcome, the election will be remembered as a victory for the reformers—as the most serious challenge yet to the monopoly on political power that Iran's clerical establishment has held since the Islamic Revolution.

The long journey to this moment began at least 20 years ago, when Mohammad Khatami was still studying Western philosophy in Hamburg, Germany, and many of the intellectuals who now constitute his inner circle were just starting to formulate their ideas about democracy and civil society. Their self-imposed mission was one day to create a system of government whereby democratic principles could be made compatible with an Islamic system. In short, they wanted Iranians to have a direct role in shaping their government.

Now, two decades later, Khatami and his loyalists are placing their hopes on another generation of Iranian youth. More than 60 percent of Iran's 68 million people are under the age of 25. The younger generation has little memory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution and is only dimly aware of the revolution's leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who died ten years later. But, like Khatami and his allies, today's young people want expanded democracy, better economic opportunities, and a more relaxed approach to Islam. They are intolerant of the regime's daily intrusions into their lives.

The growing public support for the reform movement, fueled by the emergence of a new generation of reform-minded Iranians, has left the ruling class in a bind. On the one hand, the conservative clerical establishment is as reluctant as ever to relax its grip on power. On the other, it now risks a significant popular outcry if it rigs elections too blatantly. The result has been a much lighter touch than the hard-liners wielded in past elections. True, the Guardian Council barred 762 candidates, but that was out of a field of 6,800—there were many more disqualifications four years ago, when the Council eliminated 40 percent of all parliamentary candidates. Back then, many reformers did not even bother signing up to run. This time, numerous prominent reformers were left on the ballot, including the president's brother, Mohammad Reza Khatami, who replaced Nouri atop the Islamic Iran Participation Front's slate.

As a result, Iran has experienced what had until recently been inconceivable—a truly contested parliamentary contest. The brief one-week campaign was marked by scores of noisy rallies, public speeches, and other gatherings. In past elections, conservative factions, sure of their success, have felt little need to campaign. But this year one group even launched a telephone hotline to publicize its candidates.

Perhaps nothing illustrates the change better than the declining political fortunes of Gholamhossein Karbaschi. The former mayor of Tehran, Karbaschi stood as the great symbol of reform at a time when democracy seemed impossible and economic liberalization represented the only realistic form of change. A champion of modernization, Karbaschi built high-rises, California-style freeways, and picturesque parks during his tenure as mayor. And, with a vast municipal budget at his fingertips, he helped elect President Khatami in May 1997. When Karbaschi was imprisoned last spring, his young supporters took to the streets and wept on his last afternoon of freedom. Reformers gathered at his house to

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bid him farewell and hail him as a hero.

But, when Karbaschi was released from Tehran's Evin prison this January after a pardon from Iran's supreme leader, no fans came to greet him with flowers. A cartoon in one popular newspaper summed up the moment: It showed Karbaschi entering prison last spring as a giant and resurfacing as a midget. In just eight months the reform movement he helped create had left him behind. Compared with the Islamic Iran Participation Front's calls for a free press, a judicial system free of special interests, law enforcement that respects citizens' rights, and a limit to the clergy's role in politics, Karbaschi's agenda of economic liberalization seemed passé.

Karbaschi also lost favor with the reformers when his Executives of Construction Party chose former two-term president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani to head its slate. An economic liberal popular with Iran's traditional older generation, Rafsanjani was believed to be the only person who could save the party from defeat. But Rafsanjani is a conservative on social change whose tenure, which lasted from 1989 to 1997, was characterized by some of Iran's most repressive social and political policies. Under Rafsanjani, morality police routinely stopped young men and women in public places and carted them off to jail if they could not prove they were married or related. Freedom of expression was widely curtailed, satellite dishes were banned, and the Guardian Council was first given the power to bar candidates from elections.

Predictably, then, Rafsanjani's entrance into the race drew harsh attacks from reformers and liberals of all stripes. All-day seminars were held on one Tehran university campus to assassinate his character. He was accused of everything from turning a blind eye to a string of murders of secular intellectuals while he was president to continuing the costly war with Iraq against the wishes of Ayatollah Khomeini. Such a critical reevaluation of a former leader was almost unprecedented in Iranian history, and there were signs that Rafsanjani—and even many of his critics—were taken aback by the fury of the attacks. To be sure, with his core constituency still intact in traditional neighborhoods, like those in south Tehran, Rafsanjani was, as of this writing, expected not merely to win a seat in parliament but to become the next speaker—a post he used to great effect in the early years of the revolution.

But, even if that happens, Rafsanjani will face a far different parliament than he did back then. It will look a lot less like the revolutionary political elite and a lot more like the population at large. There will be fewer clerics and more women. And there will be a far broader range of economic, political, and social views, ingredients vital to Khatami's campaign to build a true civil society within Iran's Islamic system.

"In one sentence, our campaign is to change the political system of Iran to such an extent that free and fair elections can be held," Mohammad Reza Khatami told a university campaign rally. The elections of February 18 may not fully realize that dream, but they are closer to it than any held before and freer than anyone dreamed possible as recently as one year ago. ■

Nashville Dispatch

Earful

By Ryan Lizza

Jack Gargan's tenure as Reform Party chairman was short—only 43 days. But it might have lasted a few hours longer were it not for Bill Higgins. Last Saturday, after almost seven hours of pitched warfare over Gargan's fate at the Reform Party's Nashville meeting, Higgins, an older man with a plastic tube in his nose and a watermelon-sized tank hanging from his shoulder, stepped up to a microphone. "I've filled my oxygen bottle up twice today," he pleaded between wheezes. "I want to have a vote right now!" Minutes later, the delegates officially purged Gargan from the Reform Party.

Gargan, a 69-year-old Florida retiree, was on his way out as Reform Party chairman almost from the day he came in. An ally of Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura, Gargan was elected at last summer's national Reform Party convention over the strong objections of the party's founder, Ross Perot, and Perot's supporters. And those objections only intensified once Gargan took over. Leading the charge were outgoing Reform Party Chairman Russ Verney, a Perot ally, and the party's Perot-dominated executive committee. For months, Gargan fought with the committee over everything from control of the party's website to the location for the party's convention. In January, the committee called for a national meeting to vote on whether to oust Gargan. Sensing that Perot's forces—and now those of Pat Buchanan, who switched to the Reform Party in October and whose backers joined the attack on Gargan—would prevail, Ventura left the party the day before the Nashville meeting, blasting it as "hopelessly dysfunctional."

That dysfunction was in full blaze in Nashville, as the entire constellation of Reform oddities descended on the Airport Marriott. Lenora Fulani, the mind-therapy Marxist turned Reform Party power broker, held court on a sofa in the lobby. John Hagelin, the perennial Natural Law Party presidential candidate who's now seeking the Green Party and Reform nominations as well, hosted a Continental breakfast for hungry Reformers. The delegates seemed less than impressed when he pledged to put the full force of the Natural Law Party at their disposal. Amid the buzz of activity, party regulars griped about Ventura and sang the praises of Perot, who, many hoped, would be firmly back in control of the party by the end of the weekend. Gushed Brent Summerhays, a 60-year-old former restaurateur from Oregon: "Pound for pound, he's the toughest little guy in the world." As for Gargan: "He's broken the Tenth Amendment—and that's my favorite amendment."

The meeting got off to a rough start when, as delegates filed into the hotel's banquet hall, some were served court papers. Gargan had filed a civil suit against executive-committee members and other Reform leaders for wasting

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party assets, not ceding control of party records, and other misconduct. Things didn't get any smoother when Gargan—who at that point was still party chairman—took the podium and refused to officially call the meeting to order. Chaos erupted. Delegates began shouting. Jim Mangia, the party secretary, rushed up to Gargan and began pounding the podium, leading the delegates in a chant of "We will meet today!" Nashville cops took strategic positions in the front of the room, forcibly separating delegates. "I have just called this a nonmeeting," Gargan declared, eliciting more angry yells from the crowd. Jeff Weeks, a stocky young delegate from Arkansas with a blond buzz cut, was thrilled. "This is better than the WWF!" he said.

Soon the cops were on the stage, apparently to remove Mangia. "You're going to have to throw me off this stage!" he barked. An elderly woman I had met in the hotel bar the night before jabbed me in the ribs and cackled, "Are you having fun yet?" Sensing an opportunity in the chaos, Vice Chairman Gerry Moan, an enormous man with thick glasses and a thin white mustache, made his move. "Under the powers vested in this vice chair, the chairman has decided not to act," Moan said into a floor microphone before moving onto the stage. "I am asking that the gentleman at the podium please leave."

The crowd began chanting, "Roll call! Roll call!" Dale Barlow, a woman dressed in red and covered with Jesse Ventura and Donald Trump buttons, marched through the room, screaming, "Please tell them about the lawsuit, Jack! Tell them about the lawsuit! Criminal acts!" Wendell Kinney, a delegate from Maine, brandished a copy of *Robert's Rules of Order* and demanded in a thick New England accent: "Mr. Gargan, if you do not call this meeting to order, I make a motion that the sergeant at arms remove you from the podium." The delegates erupted into wild cheers. "The party is being taken over," Gargan sighed.

But he still wouldn't call the meeting to order. Defiantly, he declared, "There will be no official Reform Party meeting!" The crowd reacted with an angry chant of "Out! Out! Out!" as people chopped their hands in the air and pointed toward the door. Finally, Gargan—who, until that point, had maintained what in this crowd passed for dignity—completely lost it. "This is the same group of people who after six weeks have not even turned the records of the party over to me," he erupted, thrusting his finger at the crowd. "Since the day I was elected I have been the target of orchestrated harassment.... *We will not have mob rule in this party*!"

Gargan's outburst further emboldened his ally Barlow, who rushed the stage to steal the microphone from the giant Moan. As the two wrestled for control, Barlow screamed at the top of her lungs, "I will vouch for Jack Gargan! For six months he has been unduly harassed! I am ashamed of this party. You are unethical Perot people! Russ Verney is the cancer of this party!" Moan tried to shove Barlow aside, demanding a roll call on the motion to remove Gargan from the meeting and crying, "Grassroots democracy will take a vote!" Finally, Moan and Mangia won the podium war, and the delegates voted to remove Gargan as chair of the meeting. Gargan, in a lather, held an impromptu, semi-coherent press conference on one side of the stage. "They've always had people used to laying over," he fumed. "They've got Jack Gargan now—and I don't lay over."

With the Perot faction now in control of the meeting, Gargan sat silently on the edge of the stage, promising not to leave the room, not even to go to the bathroom. "As long as the chair is present," he insisted, "they can't call the meeting to order." For hours he sat, through endless bureaucratic wrangling, bickering, and name-calling. Finally, Higgins, toting his oxygen tank, stepped to the microphone and demanded a vote. But then a fracas broke out over whether the Perotistas needed a two-thirds majority of all delegates or just two-thirds of the delegates present. Nobody was exactly sure how many people two-thirds was, anyway. "Does someone have a calculator?" a delegate yelled. Finally the delegates voted, 109 to 31, to permanently remove Gargan as party chairman.

"It's a good thing this vote didn't count," said Gargan in his valedictory speech, trying to sound upbeat. He threatened more lawsuits and accused the Perotistas of a pattern of harassment, including blasting him with mass e-mails and "putting a howler machine" on his telephone. "Thank you for taking the time to at least let me have a little bit of say here," he concluded. A few delegates clapped. Some booed. Many had already left. "Do you think you'll join the Reform Party?" I asked hotel security guard William Robinson late in the day. "I'm not even going to vote after this," he replied.

Unmercifully, the meeting wasn't yet over. Having vanquished the Ventura forces, the leaders set about installing the new regime—or, rather, reinstalling the old regime. First, the delegates voted to hold the party's presidential nominating convention in Long Beach, California, Perot's favored spot, instead of in Minnesota, where Ventura's backers wanted it. Next, they nominated four candidates to replace Gargan: Verney, longtime party hack Tom McLaughlin, a man named David Goldman, and Pat Choate, Perot's 1996 presidential running mate and the current chairman of Buchanan's campaign. After Goldman and Verney withdrew, Choate defeated McLaughlin 101 to 29. Then the delegates elected Verney chairman emeritus. The Perotistas were ecstatic. "Time for that champagne," a woman in the back of the room sang.

For the major parties, maybe. In Nashville, the Reform Party didn't just shoot itself in the foot; it shot itself in the face. Several times before, most notably when respected former Colorado Governor Richard Lamm sought its presidential nomination in 1996, the party has shown signs of evolving from a personal fiefdom into a genuine movement. And, several times before, the pint-sized lunatic from Texas has reeled it back in. Now, at a time when the nation seems ripe for a crusade against political corruption—the Reform Party's signature issue—the party has thrown out its one independently elected official and his supporters in the most ham-fisted way imaginable. Perot is back in the saddle, aided by a genuine American neo-fascist and a woman who presided over an alleged Marxist cult. "The political circus is over," Choate declared on CNN after his victory. Actually, it's only just begun. ■

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Wanted: teachers.

Short Fall

By Matthew Miller

It's two hours into the school year, and already Vince Eisman is full of regrets. As the kids play kickball at recess, the new fourth-grade teacher at Coliseum Street Elementary School in central Los Angeles is kicking himself. Where did the time go? The "What was the most exciting thing about your summer?" exercise had taken much longer than expected, and he'd barely gotten started on his classroom rules of behavior by the time break came. Still, Eisman—instantly christened Mr. "Iceman" (a name that will stick) by one nine-year-old—is hopeful. Though they score around the sixteenth percentile on state achievement tests, his 20 students—nearly all black or Latino—seem eager, with hands raised and faces bright. He'd heard horror stories about disconnected or drugged-out parents, but several introduced themselves this morning and urged him to "work 'em hard." Over the buzz of playground chatter, Eisman, 30, is excited, overwhelmed, and self-critical all at once. "Maybe I should have done the rules first," he says. "I didn't get anything done like I'd planned."

For one of L.A.'s toughest schools, Eisman was a catch. Few new teachers are finishing a master's degree in Roman history with a thesis on Augustan poetry and propaganda. Eisman had originally planned to teach college. His wife kept telling him he was great with young kids, but Eisman feared they wouldn't be stimulating enough. To test the water, he spent a year subbing in K–12 classes while teaching two night courses in Greco-Roman history at a community college. The college students seemed burned-out and flaky. The kids were a blast, and working with them stretched him like nothing he'd done before. Eisman got accepted by a "district intern program" that crash-trains uncertified newcomers in L.A., turning raw talent into reasonable classroom managers over three intense weeks (the rookies also take night courses for two years while they work). Taught mainly by program alumni who've thrived in the city's schools, it's the kind of local effort that should be applied nationally. Eisman faxed his resumé to schools and was hired within days. He packed up his wife and baby and set off for pricey Tinseltown to live, somehow, on $32,000 a year.

Eisman's classroom is in a portable, prefab "bungalow," a monument to the district's failure to plan for rising enrollments. It smells of disinfectant. He and his wife spent days scrubbing off mold left by the previous occupant. Posters of Martin Luther King Jr., Willie Mays, and Sidney Poitier dot the walls. Another poster reminds students to report any weapon they see. His kids work in groups, "interviewing" each other about their vacations.

"Are you gonna stay here?" a boy named Mikhel suddenly asks. They've been abandoned by so many teachers, Eisman explains later. Not to mention family members. "Yes," Eisman tells Mikhel, "I'm here for good."

Los Angeles had better hope so, because its schools are a shambles. More than half of the newly hired teachers in L.A. lack proper certification. California's vaunted push to reduce class size has made matters worse, opening up new spots in tonier suburbs to which veteran urban teachers happily flee. The result is that poor kids, who are most in need of experienced teachers, get mostly rookies. "The problem is so large we've had a hard time treading water and not losing ground," says Gary K. Hart, the state's secretary for education.

It's not just California. Across the nation, schools will need two million new teachers over the next decade, thanks to a coming wave of retirements and rising enrollments. Fully two-thirds of today's teaching jobs will turn over. Replacing those who leave with top talent rather than just warm bodies is a tall order, especially in urban districts, where half the new teachers quit within five years (depressingly, studies suggest, it's the smarter half). With research showing that as much as half of the achievement gap facing poor and minority students is due not to poverty or family conditions but to systemic differences in teacher quality, urban teacher recruitment is arguably the biggest issue in education.

Yet, in a year when schools top voters' concerns, the teacher gap is either off the radar screen or the subject of misleading hype. George W. Bush speaks of "the soft bigotry of low expectations" and the moral imperative to leave no student behind. Then he uses up the federal surplus offering each of America's million-dollar earners a tax cut bigger than what most veteran teachers make in a year. John McCain floated a targeted tax break for top teachers so half-baked that it was laughed into the ether. Between practical questions about how to decide which teachers qualify and the philosophical irony of a conservative doling out Clinton-style tax trinkets to shape behavior, even McCain hasn't seen fit to resurrect it.

Al Gore and Bill Bradley offer "plans," but they're largely symbolic. Both suggest a mix of college scholarships, loan forgiveness, and bonuses for teachers in high-need areas. Gore goes further, using federal money (for the first time) to give a $5,000 raise to most urban teachers. Other Democrats, probably responding to the teachers' unions that are among their top campaign donors, have climbed aboard. California Governor Gray Davis made teaching the centerpiece of his recent State of the State address; Senator Charles Schumer of New York has cobbled together the inevitable "Marshall Plan." Still, none of it adds up to anything that would make, say, a 22-year-old science grad in San Jose swap the $50,000 she could earn at a high-tech firm for $28,000 at the local school. "I don't think $5,000 across-the-board increases are going to accomplish much," says Michael Casserly, executive director of the Council of Great City Schools, which represents big urban districts.

The depressing reality our teacher woes underscore is that today's high-profile education wars are largely a sideshow. For a decade now, most of the oxygen in the schools debate has been consumed by structural innovations like charter

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schools, vouchers, and "whole school" reform. These ideas all have merit, but they miss a larger truth: If we can't lure hundreds of thousands of Vince Eismans into the nation's toughest schools, all the "systemic" reforms in the world won't make much difference.

The first paradox of the teacher shortage is that there's not literally a shortage—we're producing enough teachers, but they're in the wrong places. According to Linda Darling-Hammond, a professor of education at Stanford University and director of the National Commission on the Future of Teaching, one-third to one-half of the 200,000 teachers we need each year come from a "reserve pool" of teachers reentering the job market. That leaves a need for 100,000 to 130,000 new teachers, and teacher-education programs produce roughly 180,000 annually. A chunk of these put off work for travel, further study, or the hunt for the perfect job. But the real problem is "getting them from where they're trained to where they're needed," Darling-Hammond says. The Northeast, for example, "exports" teachers. High-poverty areas have a tough time "importing." Fifty state bureaucracies certify teachers, a patchwork scheme that forces even previously licensed arrivals to attend pricey night courses and jump through various other hoops. Districts often won't pay incoming teachers salaries commensurate with their seniority. As a result, many women (who still make up 72 percent of the profession) leave the field when their husbands relocate; a large number, curiously enough, become real estate agents. Of course, true shortages exist in specialties like math, science, and bilingual education, where people trained as teachers command a premium outside the classroom.

Yet, if in theory there are enough teachers, there's another paradox: The end of discrimination means they aren't as smart as they used to be. Until the 1960s and '70s, schools got a huge hidden subsidy because many careers weren't open to women and minorities. Now, people who might once have taught science or social studies become doctors, lawyers, and engineers. The people who today choose teaching aren't coming from the top half of the class. Sandra Feldman, president of the American Federation of Teachers (and herself a product of the discrimination era), is candid about the problem. "You have in the schools right now, among . . . the teachers who are going to be retiring, *very* smart people," she says. "We're not getting in now the same kinds of people."

HOW YOU IMPROVE teacher quality is said to depend on what you think teaching is: a "profession," like law or medicine, or a "craft," like journalism. The profession camp, led by Stanford's Darling-Hammond, holds that teaching requires a serious body of knowledge (of both subject matter and pedagogy) for which university-based preparation and rigorous standards are essential. It's a sin, this camp argues, that ill-prepared teachers are routinely inflicted on children: an "emergency credentialed" surgeon would be unthinkable. They also say there's a morale factor. "Teachers resent it when they spent a lot of time finishing their education, and then they lower the bar for those entering," one longtime L.A. teacher told me. "They don't do that in medicine."

"There was a point in time when it wasn't a profession," says Arthur Levine, president of Columbia University's Teachers College, "but it's evolving into one." In today's high-tech economy, Levine explains, kids need skills that weren't as essential in the days of plentiful, unionized manufacturing jobs, and raising everyone to new and higher levels of achievement requires better-trained teachers. That's partly because the deterioration of inner cities has filled urban schools with kids who are harder to teach. To design a curriculum, manage a classroom, and understand how troubled children develop and learn—all this requires pedagogical training.

Still, the "craft" camp, led by Chester E. "Checker" Finn Jr., an energetic former education official in the Reagan administration who now runs the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, has a point. Becoming a teacher involves too many irrelevant, protectionist hoops, Finn argues, producing routine horror stories about ace biology Ph.D.s who aren't allowed to teach science. The education schools are a swamp of fads and theories peddled by second-rate professors who have little experience actually teaching. (One new teacher who didn't go that route told me the education school at her university was "a bunch of cheesy girls cutting construction paper.")

There's no teacher shortage facing private or charter schools, Finn explains, even though they pay no better—and sometimes worse—than the public schools. Nor are such schools boxed in by the uniform pay scales that teachers' unions defend to the death. Why should bad teachers be paid the same as good teachers? Why shouldn't inner-city teachers get the hazard pay they deserve? When a high school chemistry teacher with lucrative options in the private sector can't earn more than a middle school social-studies teacher with none, Finn argues, you shouldn't be surprised you're short on chemistry teachers. The answer, he says, is to use the private school model: Scrap bogus certification rules and lockstep pay scales, give principals the power to hire as they see fit, and hold them strictly accountable for results.

Of course, it's hardly surprising that private schools offering richer kids, safe campuses, and interesting colleagues find it easy to attract talent. Finn admits that "if we instantly shifted to my model, we'd have a lot of principals who are not up to it," a fact critics say renders his approach impractical. Yet Darling-Hammond and Feldman concede Finn is right that the certification process is ridiculously bureaucratic and keeps good people out. What burns them up is Finn's notion that any smart person can just walk in and teach.

"You know what I'd like to do with Checker?" Feldman told me. "I would like him to commit to teach fourth grade for one year, right now. . . . Forget any training, forget anything else, let him start January for the February term to get his nerve up, and just commit."

Finn laughs a little nervously at the notion. "I taught twelfth grade [social studies] for a year [thirty years ago] and wasn't all that good at it," he says. "So I've taken a version of Sandy's dare before."

But what if they're both right? The profession-versus-craft debate is interesting in theory, but on the ground it feels like a ludicrous false choice. Isn't it obvious that we need teachers who know both the subject they're teaching and how to actually teach it? Instead of choosing between bad education schools and no education schools, we should be overhauling

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them—an overhaul that will require university presidents to accept responsibility for the quality of the nation's teaching corps and to take on the deadwood on their campuses. States should adopt uniform, reciprocal certification—with tests that demonstrate knowledge and teaching ability, not minimal skill at guessing multiple-choice questions. Alternative routes like L.A.'s intern program should be dramatically expanded. In addition, most teachers I spoke with agree that the best training comes when classroom veterans mentor new teachers on the job, especially in urban schools, where turnover is so high. This is expensive, since you need to take experienced teachers out of class to work with their younger colleagues.

And, whether teaching is profession or craft, its practitioners need better pay, better working conditions, and more prestige. A recent book sympathetic to the profession (*Teaching in America: The Slow Revolution*, by Gerald Grant and Christine Murray) says U.S. teachers are paid more, in absolute terms, than those in 25 other nations surveyed, save for Austria and the United Kingdom. But that's misleading, because American teachers earn less as a share of national wealth. Other advanced countries pay teachers about twice their per capita gross domestic product; in the United States, it's one and a half times (this would take a raise of about $15,000, or $45 billion a year, to match). Teachers typically have no way to earn more without moving into administration, a perverse incentive that lures good folks out of the classroom. Meanwhile, suburbs commonly pay $20,000 to $30,000 more for senior teachers than nearby urban districts; in affluent Scarsdale, New York, for example, a teacher with a master's degree and five years of experience earns $60,000, versus her New York City counterpart's $38,000.

The obvious bargain would be to spend more on teacher pay while abolishing the rules that require good and bad teachers (or those with the same seniority) to earn the same. Feldman's position, however, is that teachers are so underpaid that salaries must be hiked by 30 percent across the board before serious differentials can even be discussed. That's her opening offer, at least—and it means the ante for intelligent pay policies could be $40 billion.

Some experts say we could find the money if we reallocated the huge chunk of school dollars now used to pay nonteaching personnel. Lowell Milken, brother of fallen financier Michael Milken and head of a Santa Monica, California, foundation that focuses on teacher issues, says we can restructure career paths, including entry roles as apprentices and senior stints as mentors, in ways that would let veteran teachers earn $100,000. At that rate, by the end of their working lives, a married couple in which both partners were teachers could retire as millionaires.

In the inner cities, however, it's often working conditions that scare off recruits. Buildings are a mess. Violence is a risk. Then there's sheer volume: a high school social-studies or English teacher commonly teaches 225 kids a day, in six classes of 35 or more. "Those numbers after a while wear you down, and so many of them are high-need," says Steven Steinberg, a twelve-year veteran in L.A. "That's why the best teachers end up at the best suburban schools." The push to reduce class size, if targeted to inner-city schools, might do as much to lure good teachers as higher pay.

Like Rodney Dangerfield, teachers also feel they get no respect. "That's probably the biggest party-stopper in L.A.," one told me. Tell someone you're a teacher, and he's suddenly needed across the room. If the government can pay Hollywood to air anti-drug messages, maybe it's time to ask producers to glamorize teaching. Director Davis Guggenheim, for example, is taking a break from TV work to produce a documentary meant to "transform the way we think about the profession" and inspire young people to teach.

Government's role is less clear. After years of fake education jihads, the depressing truth is that it's hard to envision what a massive attempt to lift teaching would look like. The irony is that a genuine crusade could answer the quest for meaning amid prosperity that's a staple of today's political culture.

IT'S ALMOST CHRISTMAS, and while the Iceman's class isn't chilly, most kids, oddly, are wearing their big, puffy coats. Eisman roams the room while they do a writing exercise, a red pen perched behind his ear. Soon the noise level rises as some kids drift into chatter. "I'm going to give a three count," Eisman says firmly, "and then I want everyone back in their seats and refocused."

One. Two. Three. It works.

"It's the most consuming thing I've ever experienced in my life," he says later. In October, just when Eisman felt he was settling in, the school had to let a teacher go, and his class was shuffled to combine third and fourth graders. Now Eisman has to teach two curricula at once. Four of his fourth graders began the year unable to read at first-grade level. The school didn't have addresses or phone numbers for their parents. Needing a signature to get one of his nine-year-olds into a special program, Eisman walked the boy home. "He's locked outside of his apartment," Eisman recalls. "He pointed to a bush and said, 'You know, sometimes I lay down and sleep under that bush until my mom gets home.'" When Eisman talked to the student's mother, she had no idea he was behind in school.

One day police cars and a helicopter cornered a gunman in front of the school. The kids watched from the playground. "It's a normal thing to them," Eisman says. Many have relatives or friends in jail. "Helicopters are circling overhead, just stationary, like giant wasps," Eisman says. "I wasn't ready for that."

At one low point—feeling ineffective, overworked, isolated, and underpaid—Eisman told a colleague this wasn't the right job for him. She said he was wrong. These days, Leiane makes him think his colleague was right. Leiane used to repeatedly get into fights. When Eisman disciplined her, she'd give him dirty looks, as if it were all his fault. She hated him. "Well, something has happened," Eisman says, brightening, "and she's become this incredibly diligent, focused, fantastic student.... Her academic ability is still very low, but if she continues with this behavior she will definitely rise.

"This," he says, "is why I'm doing this.... To be honest, when we had the parent conference [with Leiane], I wept in front of the parent and the child there. I just started telling the parent how much this child has improved, how proud I am, and I just really broke down, because it's a fantastic thing." ■

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The crumbling Michigan firewall.

Improbable Cause

By JONATHAN CHAIT

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

JOHN MCCAIN'S MICHIGAN headquarters is in an abandoned jewelry store in the western end of the Lower Peninsula, far from the large population centers, in the most pro-Bush region of the state. The reason? "I live here," explains Joel Hondorp, McCain's Michigan campaign coordinator. It's a sensible enough explanation, given that, when the office opened last December, McCain's Michigan campaign staff consisted entirely of Hondorp—a ruddy-faced, retainer-wearing 27-year old who had previously held a series of low-level jobs in state politics.

Now that the Wolverine State is shaping up as a crucial battleground, McCain's Michigan staff has expanded. In fact, it has doubled—to two. A communications staffer flew in from California four days ago, and he and Hondorp sit in a shabby, windowless office trying to explain a new *Detroit Free Press* poll that, astonishingly, shows their man running even with George W. Bush. The carpet is a faded rose color, the walls barren save for a few campaign posters and newspaper clippings. The shelves contain almost nothing except a half-filled water bottle and an empty Nestea can. In the middle of our interview, Hondorp's colleague takes a phone call by picking up the receiver on a fax machine, which was pressed into service because a working phone couldn't be found on such short notice. The line apparently dies in mid-conversation, and he examines the receiver quizzically before placing it back on the machine.

The McCain team doesn't look any more fearsome when seen through the eyes of its adversaries. When I ask Michigan's governor, John Engler—the man masterminding W.'s campaign in the state—about Hondorp, he seems only vaguely aware of his presence. "He's a nice young man," says Engler. "I don't know him very well." When I mention Hondorp to Dave Doyle, a Lansing lobbyist, Engler confidant, and Bush supporter, he laughs. "He worked for me," recounts Doyle. "We called him 'the Dorp.'"

The Bush campaign is counting on the Dorp factor to win George W. the nomination. Their argument goes like this: Sure, McCain can win early states like New Hampshire and South Carolina, where he has concentrated his resources and campaigned for months. But, in the rapid-fire primaries that follow, where McCain will not have the luxury of face-to-face politicking, Bush's establishment strength will prove decisive. This proposition will find its first true test in the Michigan primary, held just three days after South Carolina's. Michigan will require a new style of campaign—contested by local party functionaries, bolstered by advertising and by quick candidate fly-throughs aimed less at reaching voters directly than at making the local news. And every primary after Michigan's will be the same way. If McCain loses here, it is unlikely he will recover. If he wins here, he can probably win anywhere, and the strategic calculation that undergirds the Bush campaign will collapse.

The man behind Bush's Michigan strategy is also the man in front of it: John Engler. Last June, Engler moved the Republican primary from March 21 to February 22, to halt any insurgent candidacy the early states might throw up. It is extremely important to the Michigan governor that he deliver his state for Bush. For one thing, his friendship with George W. dates to 1988, and four years ago the Texas governor tabbed Engler "a great choice" for vice president under Bob Dole. For another, if Engler saves W.'s bacon, the Texan might actually be able to make that "great choice" himself. And, if not chosen as veep, Engler would at least have a shot at being secretary of education. Last year—in what, for Engler, passes as Churchillian rhetoric—the governor called his state a "solid asbestos" firewall.

Building a firewall is the kind of thing at which Engler is very, very good. The quality for which he is best-known—besides his girth, which may have been what kept him off Dole's ticket—is his tenacity. Engler's father, a cattleman in rural central Michigan, ran for the state House in 1968 and failed to oust the Republican incumbent. Two years later,

ILLUSTRATIONS BY GLENN HEAD

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Engler himself, at the age of 21, ran for the seat and won. "He outworked him," recalls Bill Ballenger, editor of the newsletter *Inside Michigan Politics*.

Engler's dogged march to power parallels that of another portly partisan: Newt Gingrich. In the Michigan legislature, conservatives like Engler were a weak minority ignored by a corporate establishment and a popular liberal Republican governor, William Milliken, that had long reconciled themselves to labor unionism. After Milliken retired in 1982, the Engler-led GOP took over the state Senate by recalling, midterm, two Democrats who had voted for an unpopular tax hike. Engler used his perch to campaign for governor, wining in 1990.

An uncharismatic man, Engler derives his power not from any widespread affection—even many of his fellow Republicans dislike him—but from his dogged mastery of the procedural mechanisms of politics. In 1988, after insurgent religious conservatives loyal to Pat Robertson took control of the presidential nominating caucus, Engler maneuvered a rule change through the legislature to pack the caucus for then-Vice President George Bush. As governor, he seized upon the midterm retirement of three Democratic legislators—which created a temporary GOP majority in the lower chamber—to pass a measure banning unions from spending member dues on politics. More recently, he opposed a school-choice referendum favored by conservatives because he feared it would spark a labor countermobilization, thus endangering the reelection of his longtime ally Senator Spencer Abraham (see "Strange Choice," by Mike Catanzaro, January 24).

McCAIN HAS TRIED to turn the governor's fearsome reputation against him. "The Engler machine is after us," he told a suburban Detroit crowd during a one-day stop. "We're all hoping [it] is as efficient and overwhelming as the Gregg machine in New Hampshire"—a reference to the failed efforts of New Hampshire Senator Judd Gregg on Bush's behalf.

But the parallel is not precise. Neither New Hampshire nor South Carolina has a Republican governor. In South Carolina, McCain has enjoyed the backing of two popular congressmen and roughly one-third of the state legislature. In New Hampshire, more state representatives endorsed him than endorsed Bush. In Michigan, by contrast, the party apparatus stands foursquare against him. Bush has collected more money from Michigan, per capita, than from any other state besides Texas. He has received endorsements from Michigan's lieutenant governor, its secretary of state, 21 of its 23 GOP state senators, 51 of its 58 state legislators, and the entire Republican congressional delegation.

By contrast, McCain seems not to have solicited endorsements in Michigan at all. "They didn't make a perfunctory phone call to anybody," says Dan DeGrow, the state Senate majority leader and a Bush supporter. "Nothing." The Arizona senator's first endorsement came from Joe Shwarz, a retiring state senator who read McCain's book and spontaneously switched his allegiance from Bush to McCain. Speaking in Michigan, McCain introduced Shwarz as "the bravest man in the state of Michigan. He has to hire someone to start his car in the morning."

To make matters worse, Engler has appointed roughly 2,000 people to state positions over the years, and many of them have, conveniently, decided to take time off from their jobs to canvass the state for Bush. One such volunteer is Doyle, who, in addition to being a lobbyist, is one of Engler's eight appointees to the board of Oakland University and plans to work the phones to get out the vote. Another is Geralyn Lasher, who has taken vacation time from her position at the Department of Community Health to serve as Bush's Michigan spokeswoman. If the primary turnout stays low, as it has in years past, Michiganders whose careers are connected to Engler, and their friends, family, and neighbors, will account for a significant chunk of the electorate.

AT BUSH'S MICHIGAN campaign headquarters, located in a brick-and-glass strip mall outside Lansing, 16 campaign workers, mostly in business attire, sit before laptop computers and banks of telephones. A row of printers sits on a table in the corner, and the walls are adorned with a series of color-coded state maps dotted with pushpins. And the office is not even operating at full strength: ten or so staffers are out traveling with former President Bush, who is spending the day campaigning in the state for his son. A few days ago, Elizabeth Dole swung through.

If the McCain camp has a strategy to combat all this firepower—other than riding the momentum from early victories—they're not divulging it. McCain's staffers speak vaguely of Macomb County, a collection of Detroit suburbs known as the home of Reagan Democrats. McCain's Michigan communications director, the newly arrived Californian, thinks this area particularly important for McCain's chances, but he pronounces it "MAY-comb," as in Macomb County, Georgia, rather than "muh-COMB," the way Michiganders say it. During a speech in Saginaw, an industrial city two hours north of Detroit, McCain recounted how he won the support of the thousands of young voters who registered the day of the New Hampshire primary. For a moment, it appeared the Arizona senator was going to predict a similar occurrence in Michigan, but then he stopped and wondered aloud, "I don't know if you have [same-day registration] in Michigan or not." They do not.

But maybe the McCain camp doesn't need a strategy in Michigan. Without a strategy, without endorsements, and without much money, they're doing amazingly well. In November, Bush led McCain 72 to seven in the state, and in mid-January he led 51 to 16. Even after New Hampshire, George W.'s Michigan chairman predicted that Bush would not only win the state but carry every congressional district.

The first poll showing McCain and Bush running neck and neck stunned Bush's supporters. A subsequent survey reported that McCain was up by nine. Engler has started playing down talk of asbestos. He speaks instead about Bush carrying the Republican vote and expresses alarm about Democrats in Detroit crossing over to vote for McCain. In fact, there is little evidence of any organized Democratic effort for McCain. Engler's repeated warnings about a pro-McCain Detroit vote are probably intended to spark a

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countermobilization by suburban and rural Republicans, who have long had a hostile relationship with the city. But this is mainly spin designed to rationalize a Bush defeat as the work of meddlesome interlopers. It is a telling decay of expectations: Engler is delegitimizing the primary he created.

And no wonder. If Bush loses here, it would suggest something ominous—that, as a primary grows nearer and voters pay closer attention, the power of party machinery fades. If it happened in New Hampshire, it could happen in Michigan and then everywhere. Engler has not been able to keep this subversive thought from crossing the minds of even his staunchest lieutenants. "If Bush loses South Carolina and then were to lose Michigan," muses DeGrow, who, after all, filmed a pro-Bush commercial, "he has a severe problem at that point." DeGrow says "he," not "we," and in his voice there is no dread, only bemusement. ■

And you thought McCain was unpopular in Washington.

Favorite Son?

By JOHN B. JUDIS

PHOENIX, ARIZONA

THE OUTCOME OF Arizona's February 22 Republican primary isn't in doubt. Although George W. Bush led here last summer, home-state Senator John McCain had surged ahead even before his victory in New Hampshire. Indeed, with the latest polls showing McCain up by almost 20 points, Bush has all but conceded defeat. He has a skeletal staff in the state, and he's run ads only sporadically. Bush's Arizona campaign manager, Mike Hull, doesn't claim that his man will win—just that he'll hold McCain to a smaller-than-usual margin for a favorite son.

But McCain's popularity at the polls overshadows the real story in Arizona: his unpopularity among prominent state Republican officials. Governor Jane Dee Hull (whose son is Bush's campaign manager), top leaders of the state Senate, and the state's best-known law enforcement officer all oppose McCain and support Bush. Hull and the state senators take issue less with McCain's political views than with his style and his accomplishments, or lack thereof. And, while they can't beat him next week—Hull does not command anything resembling a political machine—they could hurt him by using the media attention Arizona will receive to level criticisms most reporters haven't heard. "John McCain hasn't shown he can work with people on a state level," says State Senator Scott Bundgaard, the chairman of the Finance Committee, in the kind of statement that's tailor-made for a Bush TV ad. "Why should we trust him on a national level?"

The opposition to McCain is not ideological. The Arizona GOP is divided into moderate and conservative wings. But McCain's state-level foes, unlike his national critics, come from both wings of the party. Hull and State Senator Ed Cirillo are prominent moderates, while Bundgaard, Senate Majority Leader Rusty Bowers, and Maricopa County Sheriff Joseph Arpaio are well-known conservatives.

Hull's hostility to McCain is particularly telling. She's an outstanding governor, reelected in 1998 with 61 percent of the vote, and is not known for carrying on political vendettas. When asked to explain her reasons for endorsing Bush, she focuses on the Texas governor's strengths rather than on McCain's weaknesses. "Having worked with Governor Bush, I came to feeling very strongly that a governor such as Bush would make a very good president," she says. "I liked the things he did in Texas with children, health care, and education." But later in the interview her criticism of McCain starts to show through. "When you are president," she says, "you have to build consensus, and Governor Bush would be better at that. When you are a senator or a congressman, you either build coalitions to get your policies through or you vote yes and no." When I ask her whether McCain is the kind of politician who just votes, she assents.

People close to Hull say she has also been alienated by McCain's "bullying tactics." Hull experienced such bullying firsthand when she replaced Fife Symington, who resigned amid scandal in 1997,

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and she didn't hire any McCain allies as aides. Hull has said McCain tried to make her fire one of her chief staffers. "She doesn't like [McCain], and she doesn't like the people around him, and she likes George Bush's governing style," says one source familiar with the situation. "The relationship has never been good. McCain was close to Fife [Symington]. When Jane took over from Fife, that wasn't handled the way that McCain wanted. In her speech declaring her support for Bush, she said, 'I am supporting a gentleman who . . .'—the operative word was 'gentleman.'"

IN THE STATE SENATE, three key Republicans support Bush: Bundgaard, a rising star; Bowers, the majority leader; and Tom Smith, chairman of the Rules Committee. In a discussion in Bowers's office, all three readily admitted their dislike of McCain. Bowers, a tall, balding fourth-generation Arizonan, faults McCain for his inattention to his home state. "Have you heard of Carl Hayden and Mo Udall?" he asks me. "When you think of people like that who served for extensive periods of time, you can also go back and ask what did they do for Arizona. They did lots! When we look at our senior senator, we are thinking, 'What happened?' He has brought us IGRA, the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, which is a disaster. I can't think of another thing that will affect Arizonans. Water is the West, but where is McCain? He is a non-presence." Adds Bundgaard, "They say he has seventeen years of experience. In seventeen years we have racked our brain to think of anything he has done."

McCain can say this shows he's not your typical pork-barrel senator, but it's his lack of interest in state and Western issues, not a lack of favors and perks, that concerns his critics. Arizona Republicans also question McCain's vaunted integrity. Some complain about his past friends, like the fallen financier Charles Keating, and his current associates, like hardball political consultants Wes Gullett and Charles Coughlin, whom they charge with using "scorched earth" tactics against Republicans who don't toe McCain's line. McCain's critics also protest that his campaign finance reform crusade is disingenuous. They believe that McCain—who first won office with generous financial support from Symington, Keating, and his father-in-law, beer magnate Jim Hensley—lacks credibility on his signature issue. As late as 1998, McCain refused to back a state campaign finance reform initiative, Proposition 200, that many Arizona Republicans supported and that passed 51 to 49 percent. "I absolutely feel it is hypocrisy," says Bowers. "Does John McCain turn down contributions from corporate PACs?" McCain critics also cite the favors he has done on the Commerce Committee for businesses that have contributed to his campaigns. Asks one Phoenix Republican, "Why did he want to become chairman of the Commerce Committee? Everyone knows what being chairman gets you."

McCain's Arizona critics don't buy the Bush campaign's argument that he's a liberal in disguise. But they think the truth is just as bad—that McCain is concealing his conservative convictions to curry favor among independent voters in the primaries. "The American Conservative Union has actually rated him as a conservative," says Bundgaard. "His voting record shows that he has voted conservatively. However, my concern is his hypocrisy throughout his campaign. He is attacking Bush from the left."

LISTEN FOR A while to McCain's Arizona detractors, and you detect a strange echo. While they couch their criticisms in the language of issues, what people like Bundgaard, Smith, and Bowers really care about is McCain's style—which is exactly what McCain's admirers care about. But, for the Arizona Republicans, "McCain's style" means berating politicians with whom he disagrees—whether in a primary challenge to Symington in 1994 or McCain's endorsement of Phil Gramm for president in 1996. One McCain protégé, former Attorney General Grant Woods, became a detractor when McCain, according to Woods, pressured him to end his prosecution of Symington. A former state senator says McCain still resents her for backing a rival in his first congressional contest, in 1982: "Those people who didn't support him were forever on the outside. McCain won fairly handily, but he never forgave us. That is where Jane Hull is. We are always 'those people.'"

It is tempting to dismiss these complaints as naïve. Bill Clinton and Lyndon Johnson also had volcanic tempers, and they also bullied people to get things done. But there's the rub: They got things done. Clinton and Johnson were deal-makers—they demanded loyalty and they doled out rewards. McCain's critics don't believe they have gotten anything from him. And, when they disagree with McCain, they feel that he attacks them for insubordination—an attitude more akin to the military than to politics. It's a different, and more compelling, version of McCain's "temperament problem." "I don't think his military background would lend itself to the White House," says Smith, a 24-year Marine Corps veteran.

McCain, of course, enjoys support from other state politicians. He is backed by his Senate colleague, Jon Kyl, by four of Arizona's five GOP congressmen, and by the speaker of the Arizona House. But it's rare for a presidential candidate not to enjoy virtual unanimity among the party officials in his home state. Look at the way Tennesseans, including McCain's close friend Senator Fred Thompson, lined up behind long shot Lamar Alexander. When a politician like McCain or Bill Bradley arouses opposition at home, it usually says something about his leadership ability. And leadership—more than a detailed policy agenda—is what the straight-talking former fighter pilot is selling. If Republicans in McCain's home state say he doesn't have it, and the national media listens, the Arizona primary could turn into a victory for Bush, regardless of what the election returns say. ■

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Some Sinners and a Saint

SAM SHEPARD IS fifty-six. There's something odd about that statement, and the oddity is that it's true. For years he was a voice in the theater, if not *the* voice, of the young generation, pouring out plays of bite and daring, almost hormonal in their physical energy, leaping with lyric (therefore young) imagination. Once I went to a bill of Shepard one-act plays in an off-Broadway theater, and at intermission a jazz group played in the lobby with Shepard at the drums whamming away. This seemed exactly right.

As a film actor, in such pictures as *Days of Heaven* and *The Right Stuff* and *Fool for Love*, he virtually embodied the qualities of his writing, with sex and other powers gleaming out of him. In *Far North*, an underappreciated film that he wrote and directed, an American landscape flourished before us in the perception of a vital man, probably maturing but still full of youthful yearning and chuckles.

Now comes **Simpatico** (Fine Line), which feels old. In fact, it felt old as far back as 1994, when the Shepard play that is the source of this screenplay was done in New York. It made me sad, that play. I felt that this brash, hurtling spirit had been looking backward, combing through his notes and his past plays, trying to take himself back to the days of *Geography of a Horse Dreamer* (1974). It was as if he had felt himself sliding over the crest of middle age and wanted to write young again, to be the earlier Shepard, the playwright who made us feel that, whatever the play's quality, we had got to the theater just in time to see it spring white-hot from his blazing spirit. That spirit was only dimly visible in the play; and now here is the film, which is worse.

Once again a film is up to the medium's nasty trick of underscoring the (sometimes hidden) faults of a play that it comes from. On stage the play at least seemed unified and organic. Here, adapted by Matthew Warchus and David Nicholls, it is fragmented, composed of overheated bits that attract so much attention to themselves by being isolated that the story is revealed as a suite of cooked-up complications.

The general setting is the world of horse racing, and some of it takes place in the bluegrass country. Jeff Bridges plays a wealthy Kentucky horse-breeder, owner of a champion named Simpatico who earns money for him as a stud. An old friend, Nick Nolte, a layabout back in California where Bridges once lived, calls Bridges with an emergency. Bridges reluctantly goes out there to deal with it. A scam that they both set up some years ago—and that was the base of Bridges's wealth—is about to be revealed. Involved, too, is Bridges's wife, Sharon Stone, who took part in the scam. Also on hand is Catherine Keener as a California supermarket checkout girl, who, quite incredibly, agrees to help Bridges in a mission for which she has neither experience nor motivation. The victim of that California scam, now a prospering Kentucky horse-trader, is played by Albert Finney.

If time were profligate, it would be worth seeing the film just for the pleasure of Finney's performance. He is not having good luck in his American films. He played a Southern gent in *Rich in Love* with relish and savor, but that very pleasant film went down the drain. Now, in a much less engaging film, he provides another authoritative Southern gent, another portrayal that will probably be lost.

As for the other principals, they act. Like mad. Bridges, not naturally dynamic, strives to give his role dynamism. Nolte, long hair a-flying, enjoys himself rather obviously as a lazy schemer who brown-bags whiskey. Stone makes the agonized most of this woman's middle-aged guilt for youthful misbehavior. Keener, who has shown a real edge in past work, is dampened here by a soft character who is unbelievable anyway. These actors were let loose by Warchus, one more English theater director venturing into American film (like Nicholas Hytner with *The Crucible* and Sam Mendes with *American Beauty*). Warchus tried to intensify the film moment by moment, but he has only scorched it.

Shepard chose the racing world in one more effort to explore characters who live by unconventional standards in a conventional world. This contrast worked in such plays as *Horse Dreamer* and *Curse of the Starving Class* and *Buried Child* and *True West*, but this time it seems affectedly muscular, almost exhibitionistic, like the worst latter-day Hemingway. Bits of Shepard dialogue still jab us, but *Simpatico* is little more than a symbol-laden contraption waiting for exegesis. (The name of the stud, for instance, and the fact that he is aging.) It is sad to see this gifted author looking backward, trying to recapture that first fine careless rapture. Aren't there any raptures ahead of him?

A Mexican film, **Santitos** (Latin Universe), is well-photographed, as Mexican films often are, but the cinematographer, Xavier Pérez Grubet, is not the only one to deserve a salute. The screenwriter, Maria Amparo Escandón, who adapted a novel of her own, and the director, Alejandro Springall, have made a drolly deceptive, gentle satire.

Santitos deceives agreeably because it has the courage to begin as a sentimental tale and to take its time in disclosing its intent—to spoof the way that religiosity can persuade a person to follow her own instincts as if they were heaven-sent. The title is a term for small carved wooden saints. In a town near Vera Cruz (a name not chosen carelessly) lives a youngish widow named Esperanza (ditto). Her teenage daughter has gone to a hospital for a tonsillectomy and, to everyone's shock, has died. Very soon St. Jude appears to Esperanza, behind the glass in her oven door, and tells her that the daughter is not dead, that it is the mother's duty to find her, that the girl is in the Pink House, apparently a code name for brothel. Esperanza obeys. She takes a job as a maid in a brothel because she now believes that her daughter is still alive and was abducted by white slavers. Esperanza looks for clues. She finds them, or imagines that she does. They lead her to brothels in Tijuana and Los Angeles, where she works as a pro, not a maid, always searching for clues about her daughter. In L.A. she meets a masked wrestler with whom she falls in love; and he follows her when she returns home, somewhat reconciled to her daughter's loss.

The initial gravity—a daughter's sudden death, Esperanza's belief in her oven-door saint—launches one film. Soon it becomes another one, straight-facedly satirical. Our first clue to the change is in the confessional, where her priest himself confesses—that he is a soap-opera fan. Then there is Esperanza's willingness to work her way through brothels to find her daughter. These and more peculiarities

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sweep us from realism into picaresque extravaganza. At its base is a miraculously preserved naïveté in Esperanza that makes Candide look worldly. Nothing is heavily played for laughs, and there are few. But there is an almost continuous smile.

Dolores Heredia gives Esperanza the pietistic fervor that lets her believe she is following a saint's injunction as she explores one bed after another. Fernando Torre Lapham is crinkly as the priest (whom she frequently telephones) who follows the soap opera of Esperanza's life and condones her behavior because she is obeying a saint. Various brothel sleazeballs and a transvestite madam splash in some mock film noir touches along the way.

Escadon and Springall have made a subtle, sly film, and the slyness lingers nicely in the mind. ■

Eyes Wide Shut

By James Wood

Dreaming by the Book by Elaine Scarry

(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 292 pp., $26)

I.

"My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel—it is, before all, to make you *see*," writes Conrad in his famous preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus*. Making us see, in its fullest sense, is literature's central project, and there is no critical inquiry more interesting, and more acute to writers themselves, than how this is done, and why one piece of literature succeeds at Conrad's task, and why another fails. Being inherently a discourse of failure and success, such an inquiry has about it an aroma of connoisseurship, and it is largely eschewed by contemporary criticism. But it is one of those rare areas in which writers exhaust criticism, and have much to say of their own—indeed, in which the greatest writers have great things to say, most of them agreeing, for instance, that literature builds its imaginary "worlds" in many different ways, but universally through its use of detail, of Blake's "minute particulars," of what Schiller counsels as that genius whereby "when most enthusiastic for the Whole," the great writer "preserves a coolness, a patience defying all obstacles, as regards details," of what Coleridge calls "those fine hair-strokes of exquisite judgment peculiar to Shakespeare," of what Nabokov cooingly woos as "the divine details."

Elaine Scarry's book is a book of details, for which she should be applauded. She revels in textures, and longs to share literature's palpabilities with her readers. She is extremely ambitious, seeking nothing less than a theory of literary cognition, an explanation of how literature enables us to make mental pictures. Her interest, which is really in aesthetic success, makes her an original among her theory-thicketed colleagues. She bristles benevolently, nervously impatient to speculate. Often she chooses passages from literature that have undeniable vividness—Homer, Brontë, Flaubert, and Tolstoy are her chief sponsors—and she brings powerfully to notice an unexpected element of their success.

Yet her book is not, as a whole, convincing. It too often ignores its own partiality, and pretends to be offering an overarching theory which is not more, in the end, than a series of instances. In large part, it cannot convincingly offer a theory because Scarry has no apparent interest in proving one—where proving one would mean attending to all that might contradict it. And although Scarry would seem to be on the side of writers, her book, for all its air of charming empiricism, too often has a zany academicism more outré than the most frigid theorist's. She writes as a friend of the imagination, and ends up as its enemy.

Scarry begins with a set of premises that shadow her whole book. "Imagining," she writes, "is an act of perceptual mimesis." It is a matter of making mental pictures. "When we say 'Emily Brontë describes Catherine's face,' we might also say 'Brontë gives us a set of instructions for how to imagine Catherine's face.' ... In imagining Catherine's face, we perform a mimesis of actually seeing a face." Do we, really? There must be as many readers who suspend or blur the visualizing process while reading. At times Scarry seems to be aware that turning the imagination into an exclusively visual domain, so that we must always be *seeing* literary worlds, only explains one part of the imagination. Here and there, Scarry rightly concedes that we sense atmospheres in literature in more ways than the visual. But she forgets this truth for most of her book.

She prefers to see literature as a medium for the imposition of moving mental pictures. Flaubert, Tolstoy, Homer, Brontë, and the other writers whom she discusses have as "a special project the making of pictures that move." And this is how Scarry receives the visual instructions that writers give us. What follows is the opening of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* as Scarry quotes it, with Scarry's own commentary in parentheses:

> On an evening in the latter part of May [*picture this*] a middle-aged man was walking homeward from Shaston to the village of Marlott, in the adjoining Vale of [*hear the names*] Blakemore or Blackmoor. [*Look closely at the walker's legs.*] The pair of legs that carried him were rickety, and there was a bias in his gait which inclined him somewhat to the left of a straight line. [*Let your eyes lift up to his face now.*] He occasionally gave a smart nod, as if in confirmation of some opinion, [*drift now to the region of his skull*] though he was not thinking of anything in particular... Presently he was met by an elderly parson [*look closely at his legs*] astride on a [*look closely at the color*] gray mare, who, as he rode, [*hear the sounds coming now*] hummed a wandering tune.

I am not sure if Hardy would have been flattered or alarmed by such visual diligence. He might at the very least have remonstrated with Scarry about the gray mare, and reassured her that such details are shorthand, that she should not spend too much time frowningly looking at the precise shade of gray. He might have added that, like a student drinker, she will have to "pace" herself for the long novel ahead, and that such intense concentration may be hard to sustain. Chekhov said that reading novels is like visiting people's houses; occasionally we want the author to give us some time away from our hosts, the heroes. Likewise, we need time off

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from visualization. Is it not the case that often we do not go through the exhaustive processes Scarry claims here?

Our imaginations are not blank screens for virginal instruction, but histories mixing memory and desire. When Lawrence asks me to see Strasbourg Cathedral, do I follow his every instruction, as Scarry proposes, and create a studious mental picture, or do I idly mix some of his instructions with my strong visual memories of Durham Cathedral, in the town where I was born and grew up, and then ignore or accelerate over yet more of his instructions, so that the final composite picture, half mine and half Lawrence's flickers in and out of visualization?

COLERIDGE DEFINED "the fancy" as "no other than a mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and space." This seems exactly right, and gives due credit to the selfishness of imagination, whereby we use our own personal wardrobes to dress what writers give us. How many of us have any mental picture at all of most fictional characters, of Ralph Touchett or Sondra Finchley or Lily Briscoe, or even of Emma Bovary? When these books are cast and filmed, our disappointment is often not that actors have robbed us of our visual mental pictures, but that they have supplied them in the first place, when such supply was not needed.

Scarry's idea of the imagination has a quality of goodness, of literalness, about it that seems unnatural to the process of reading. Of course, a visualizing fetish such as hers would have meant little to Schiller, or Coleridge, or even Wordsworth, who in Book Eleven of *The Prelude* laments those days when "the eye was master of the heart, / When that which is in every stage of life / The most despotic of our senses gain'd / Such strength in me as often held my mind / In absolute dominion." Scarry knows well that the Romantic ideas of the sublime and the ideal are visions of the invisible, the infinite. And her emphasis also has no means of explaining the extraordinary image-making powers of a writer such as Dostoevsky, who often gives us minimal, or the most formulaic, visual information (as Nabokov rightly complained), nor of the general ways in which nonvisual information nevertheless works to give us mental pictures (which may or may not be exactly *visual* mental pictures.)

This is surely what Flaubert, that monk of visualization, and Scarry's hero, meant when he wrote to Louise Colet that in *Don Quixote,* "how vividly we see the roads of Spain, though nowhere are they described." Flaubert did not look to Cervantes for visual instruction, for Cervantes does not give us much, and seems premodern in this regard. Still, the human atmosphere that is created by Cervantes allows us to see even those things that are not explicitly described. Our sense of the Spanish roads flows from, is a by-product of "how one pictures Sancho on his donkey, eating raw onions, urging the steed on, all the while talking with his master," as Flaubert has it.

ONE SUSPECTS THAT Scarry has been drawn to the exclusively visual by the example of cognitive psychology, with which she is impressively familiar. Following various scientific studies, she argues that daydreaming is hard. The production of mental images of our own will is labor, and we are not very good at it. Our imagined images always lack "the vitality and vivacity of the perceived ones." She quotes Aristotle on "the feebleness" of images. In particular, she maintains, it is very hard to picture solid objects in the mind, such as a wall or a face, and it is hard to "move or to animate the image." It is hard to see, in our mind's eye, a spear or a bird moving through the air. A face, which is both solid and mobile, is especially hard to picture in daydreaming or recollection, and, apparently, cognitive psychological experiments support Scarry. "Solidity is difficult to reproduce in the imagination because it entails touch, the sense whose operation is most remote to us in imagining."

How true is this? One wonders if Scarry has ever tried to picture a car, an undeniably solid object, traveling down a road. One would seem to have no difficulty imagining its noisy lurch, the frustrating flash of its windows as it passes and fails fully to disclose its passengers, the oddly small driver overwhelmed by the large steering wheel and the smaller flash of his spectacles, the way wheels seem to spin backward when they are speedily moving forward, and so on. As one puts this picture in motion, one sees it from different angles, now by the roadside, now from above. And when these exclusively visual powers fail us, if they do, we hear the car displacing gravel and churning it to the side, we hear the creak, so like a mattress, of the car's suspension, we hear the falling note of the engine. We smell the sweet aromatics of the gas. Picturing imagined or remembered objects, then, would appear to be a total sensory experience, and not exclusively visual; and picturing solid and mobile objects would seem to be quite possible.

But Scarry maintains that solid objects are difficult to animate in the mind. And yet, she continues, literature wonderfully enables us to see solidities, to move them across landscapes and so on, to stretch and to fold and to flutter them. Literature allows us to do those things which are so difficult in daydreaming, and makes our mental pictures as real, perhaps more real, than actual objects themselves. So "the question is: how does it come about that this perceptual mimesis, which when undertaken on one's own is ordinarily feeble and impoverished, when under authorial instruction sometimes closely approximates actual perception?" It is an interesting question, and one is ready to forgive the battered premises for an answer that might renew them.

SCARRY'S ANSWER, WHICH occupies the rest of the book, is sometimes stimulating, but ultimately it is very strange, very speculative, and very obviously erroneous. It is also complicated and difficult to summarize. Broadly put, Scarry believes that literature makes us imagine pictures not just because it provides us with vivid ones, but because in doing so it mimics the way we actually perceive things in the first place. "The imagination produces a mimesis of sensation by miming the deep structure that brings the sensation about."

This can best be evidenced, says Scarry, by returning to the difficulty that we have in imagining solid objects or objects in motion. Scarry argues that a universal feature of mental pictures is that they are ghostly, filmy, gauzy. This is why, she maintains, and with some plausibility, that we so readily imagine ghost stories: because mental images are themselves ghost-like and insubstantial. "What is hard is successfully to imagine an object, any object, that does *not* look like a ghost." She refers to the "clothlike" nature of mental pictures. Such images lack, of course, the solidity of the real world. A mental image of a wall, or a face, is really only a filmy, ghostly indistinct thing, which we can stretch and play around with in our minds as we cannot do in real life. "It seems self-evidently true that, of any two images, the one that can be more easily imagined can also be more easily moved. For instance, rare objects—ghosts, filmy curtains, shadows—move more easily than solid ones do."

If this is true—and Scarry, alas, does not find much virtue in "if"—then it follows that when we picture filmy, gauzy, or otherwise insubstantial objects in our minds, those insubstantial objects will more closely approximate their actual subjects than mental pictures of solid objects like walls and faces will approximate *their* actual objects. "Our imagined gauze more closely approximates actually perceived gauze than our imagined wall resembles an actually perceived wall. Some physical objects have features that more closely

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approximate the phenomenology of imagined objects than do others."

For this reason, continues Scarry, it is no accident that people find it much easier to imagine flowers than faces. Flowers have what Aristotle called "rareness." They are soft, light, insubstantial, and continually bending and stretching. They are just like mental images themselves. Everyone has had difficulty in recalling a beloved face, but "has anyone ever encountered someone complaining that though she loves columbine above all other flowers, or meadow rue the best in the world, she just cannot get an image of it clearly in mind?"

But are flowers indeed picturable because they already resemble mental pictures? Scarry is so keen to plume her speculations that she banishes common sense. Surely flowers are imaginable because they are typical—a rose is a rose is a rose, by and large—while faces are individual. Everyone knows what is meant by a tulip, and pictures one, but no one knows what is meant by a face. It may indeed be the case that we can "picture" a tulip because we do not really bother to picture it at all, but merely slot a formulaic genre-picture into place. (Much literature acts formulaically on us like this, too. Scarry neglects what is formulaic or automatic in literature, having eyes only for the intense labor in visualizing literary worlds.)

LET US GRANT Scarry her theory for the moment, that "rare" objects are easier to imagine than solid ones. What are the implications for literature? She seems to suggest that writers will invariably use what she calls "rare" or insubstantial objects—"hair, paper, light cloth, flower petals, butterflies (petals in motion)"—as, in effect, a way of softening up the reader's picture-making capacities. By describing "objects which, because of their rarity, are close to mental objects," writers allow the reader to picture what is most easily picturable, for rare objects can be more easily moved about than solid objects in the mind: "Filmy objects ... continually move about in the mind almost without effort." In picturing these filmy objects, we actually undergo, while reading, the very process by which we make all our mental pictures.

Scarry would seem forced by this theory to the assumption that writers will describe filmy or otherwise rare objects *whenever* they need us to picture these and other more solid objects. If the mental picture of a curtain is closer to the real curtain than the mental picture of, say, a face behind the curtain is to a real face, a writer will slip into his overall description a picture of the curtain, since asking us to imagine the curtain softens us up for the harder act of imagining the face. This is reminiscent of Christopher Collins's suggestion in his book *The Poetics of the Mind's Eye* (not mentioned by Scarry) that objects seen against the sky—the sun, moon, stars, birds, and so on—exert a special power over us, because we see them in ways similar to how we visualize things in our minds: the sky is like the blank screen of our minds, against which we visualize moving objects.

So Scarry claims, apparently with justice, that whenever Homer describes a heavy spear travelling through the air, he describes not the spear, which being solid is hard to picture in motion, but the shadow of the travelling spear: the filmy or gauzy substitute for the spear, which we can more easily move on our mental retina. She quotes a scene from *Madame Bovary*, in which Emma is parting from her lover, and in which Flaubert describes her apron springs: "At such moments they had already said goodbye, and stood there silent; the breeze eddied around her, swirling her stray wisps of hair at her neck, sending her apron strings flying like streamers around the waist."

The Scarry-less reader would certainly enjoy the vividness of those fluttering apron strings, and might see them as powerful emblems of female escape and entrapment: the very strings of domesticity waving luxuriously in the breeze, yet strings nonetheless, tying Emma to her destiny. But Scarry's theory presses her to see them as objects primarily placed in the text for the purpose of mentally softening up the reader's picture-making abilities. This is her commentary: "To be instructed to put in one's mind ... a floating wisp of hair along the neck ... or apron string is not difficult; for it is the fate of mental images to float, and Flaubert and Brontë here enlist that trait of imagining into the act—they have us carry out what we are already predisposed to do."

II.

THE OBVIOUS OBJECTION to this is that Scarry's determined emphasis on the visual, on what it is "not difficult" to picture mentally, makes visual detail more visual than it actually is; or rather, it denies visual detail its capacity to have dimensions other than the visual. Fetishizing the function of detail, she would seem to rob it of its value, its meaning in a larger scene, and in an entire work of art. This is repeatedly the case in her extended readings of passages from *Madame Bovary*, a work upon which she relies heavily. There is a moment when Charles Bovary at the opera spills a glass of orgeat over a lady's "cerise taffeta gown."

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How, asks Scarry, did "Flaubert ever come up with" this scene? Scarry thinks it has to do with mental objects, and picturable colors: "Part of what impels Flaubert to create this scene is the patch of liquid orange-yellow [the apparent color of orgeat] and the larger patch of cherry-red inevitably coming together. But he is also impelled by the very agitability of Charles, whose elbows are 'jarred at every other step,' so that he has to grasp the glass in two hands. And Flaubert can rely on our ability to carry out this mental act of shaking and fluttering the image of Charles because he has earlier habituated us to picture the flimsy paper sets at the opera."

Scarry seems to maintain that Flaubert wrote this scene, and that we can picture it so well, because it involves a collision of sharply picturable colors; because we are able to shake and to move around in our mind a clothlike or gauzy mental picture of the hapless Charles Bovary, and that we are able to do this because Flaubert's earlier description of the papery and insubstantial opera sets has softened us up, so that Charles has himself become a vivid papery mental object. But, for a start, Flaubert does not describe the color of the orgeat (often translated as "barley-water"), so the collision of picturable colors is fanciful. Moreover, this scene occurs quite far into the novel. Why would Charles not already be a vivid mental object for us?

But of course he is. Flaubert goes to great pains to show Charles as a clumsy provincial, who has arrived at the opera too early, who is irritating Emma by talking, and who tops it all by spilling a drink that he is bringing for Emma over a wealthy lady, whose husband mutteringly threatens to sue him for cleaning costs. Another reader might remember about the scene not the visual gown but the wonderfully vivid auditory detail—that the woman, when spilled upon, cries "like a peacock." Such a reader might then recall that when Charles Bovary first visited Emma at her father's farm, there were peacocks wandering about, "the luxury of Caux farmyards." Charles, then, has, in effect, spilled a drink over Emma herself; he is a defiler.

What enables us to picture a scene is made of many details, both visual and nonvisual; and what enables us to picture details is the totality of a scene, and the totality of where we are in a fiction. Why do we need the filminess of an opera stage set to make Charles a mobile mental picture? Flaubert has already made his feebleness tremendously vivid. Charles vandalizes glamour. His behavior at the opera is reminiscent of that earlier marvelous scene when, returning from a luxurious ball, he claps his hands together and announces: "How good it is to be home!" One senses Emma's sinking heart. I am not sure if, at the opera, he is "floating around" in my mind by this stage in the book, or if I am carrying out "the mental act of shaking and fluttering the image of Charles" because he is now "approximating a filmy substance." I am pretty sure that I am not. But clearly he does not need to be in this state to have entered my mind. Flaubert has already made vivid his human essence, and this is less a mental image than something akin to a musical atmosphere.

Scarry's reading orphans detail, and puts it in the workhouse: it removes it from the larger agglomeration of details, and requests of it that it do immediate local work. And what is that local work? It is to make mental pictures picturable. A circularity threatens. Scarry seems to want vivid literary pictures in order that they be mentally picturable, as if that were the final purpose of literary pictures. Thus the opera sets are present *in order* to facilitate the mental image of Charles; and Charles spills his drink *so that* we can make a mental image of him. What is clear is that Scarry's thesis does not seem to give us the freedom to allow Charles to spill his drink because he is clumsy, and does not seem to allow us *this* mental image. There would seem to be here a danger of celebrating the production of vividness for its production of mental vividness.

This circularity is even more acute in another example from Flaubert's novel, in which Léon and Emma walk to the nurse's house to visit Emma's child. Scarry believes—for reasons that are obscure—that, along with flowers, vegetable matter also facilitates the visualizing and the animation of mental pictures. She points out that on the way to the nurse's house the couple walk among flowers. She remarks that "what marks the chapter is the continual lift and fall of flowers: they are sometimes at ground level, like the lettuce, lavender, and sweet-pea in [the nurse's] garden, and at other times underfoot, like the boggy indeterminate vegetable matter the pair walk over." Sometimes, she says, "the vegetation floats suspended above ground level ... Flaubert actually manages to lift the vegetation high in the air..." Her example of this vegetable levitation is this short description of the nurse's house: "low, roofed with brown tiles, and from the attic window hung a string of onions."

The onions are the vegetative matter, lifted above ground level. Now Scarry implies that all this vegetative description is there to make us see the scene. This is silly enough, but it is much sillier after one has re-read the entire passage. Flaubert is describing a poor house given over to work. He makes this perfectly plain, for as Léon and Emma approach the house they see pigs on a dunghill, and cows. Once they are at the house, Flaubert describes the onions hanging from the window, and then bundles of sticks, surrounding "a square patch of lettuces, a few feet of lavender and some sweet-peas trained over sticks." We also see a heavy sheet of linen spread full length on the hedge. Inside the house, Flaubert describes a row of boots, and a window pane mended with a patch of blue paper. Léon finds it strange to see Emma, this fine lady, "in the midst of all this wretchedness."

The onions, then, are there to make vivid all that follows: that this is a house at subsistence level, and devoted to eking out a centime or two. Scarry may imagine that the onions are vertically raised because, being vegetable matter, they correspond to mental objects and so make a picture of the scene more possible, but she must be the only person on the planet who thinks so.

Again the circularity. In the ordinary reading, Flaubert's onions make the picture vivid not simply for its own vividness, but so that we can see what he wants us to see, which is the nurse's poverty. In Scarry's reading, Flaubert's onions make the picture vivid in order to make the picture picturable. And in Scarry's case, we do not see what Flaubert wants us to see, but only what *we* are *able* to see, what it is "not difficult" for us to picture mentally, what we are "already predisposed" to see.

In fairness, one might reply that Scarry does not ascribe this kind of intentionality to the writers whom she discusses, that her theory of picturability is merely an addendum, not a replacement, to all the other things (poverty, Charles's clumsiness) that we naturally see in a text such as *Madame Bovary*. But Scarry does, in fact, ascribe explicit intentionality to the authors she discusses. They emerge as writers consciously devoted to Scarry's theory of picturability.

Early in her book, she makes it clear that she will tie the texts that she discusses to what cognitive psychology allows them to do. "The experimental literature in cognitive psychology suggests that 'there is only a limited amount of energy or "processing capacity" with which to construct images,' with the result that a smaller image will also be a more 'filled-in image.'" This is one of her explanations for the picturability of flowers: they are bursts of color. It may or may not be an accurate account of the way the mind visualizes

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things. (Do we see bursts of color that we synthesize into a flower, and do we see a flower that we analyze into bursts of color?) Whatever the case, in the context of an aesthetic theory that posits the omnipresence of flowers in passages of vivid description, this sounds very much like an argument that writers, like the rest of us, are slaves of this universal finding of cognitive psychology. There are things writers can and cannot do, because that is the way the mind is wired.

Twenty pages later, Scarry writes, "both writers [Flaubert and Brontë] habitually assume that pictures of rarefied objects will be easy for the reader to move." This sounds as if Flaubert and Brontë create certain images for the purpose of easy mental picturability. Finally, about halfway through the book, it is out, a full-fledged theory of authorial intention. Flaubert "is consciously building up a story around picturable forms of motion, consciously designing a story that will accommodate practices that the mind can carry out." We can be "sure" that "it is intentional." Flaubert "does not decide what motions he wants and then struggle in vain to make the mind carry them out. He has figured out what motions we can compose and shapes the narrative around those moveable pictures." This is the statement that licenses Scarry's final assertion of circularity near the end of her book, that "like Homer, like Flaubert, like Brontë, Wordsworth, and Heaney, Leo Tolstoy has as a special project the making of pictures that move."

Perhaps Scarry should be congratulated for being so honest about authorial intention, a subject about which most literary theory is disingenuous. Yet it is extraordinarily unwise of her to dare this argument, and it indeed causes her entire book to unravel. Consider Scarry's use of the phrase "in vain." Flaubert, she says, does not decide what effects he wants and then "struggle in vain to make the mind carry them out." The implication is that a universal governor, a valve common to all minds, makes certain things unpicturable, and therefore impossible for a writer to attempt. Flaubert might struggle, but it would be "in vain," because we, and presumably he, could not picture these struggles.

Does Flaubert then consciously subscribe to Scarry's odd theory about the gauzy nature of mental objects, and so on? Not even Scarry would contend this. Does he just intuit it, or has he discovered it in the course of his career as a writer? But how would he have discovered it, if he were limited like the rest of us? How is he still Flaubert? And how is he consciously—Scarry's word—building picturable images for our instruction, if he, like us, can merely "carry out what we are already predisposed to do"? One would have thought that to be able to do this consciously implies a power of creative daydreaming and visual imagining that must disprove Scarry's own theory. And clearly this is right. Flaubert had immense powers of visualization and voyeuristic daydreaming, so that he was able to make us share in his fantasies.

Scarry likes to write that literature "instructs" us in the ways of picture-making. But how can it do this if the writer is only giving us what we can already see, is only having us "carry out what we are already predisposed to do"? Either Flaubert knows more than us about picturability, and then he is not limited like us; or he knows only what we know, and he is no longer an author who can instruct us. Scarry really cannot have it both ways. Her theory sounds like the latter, and runs the distinct risk of turning writers into agents of ease, providing us with what our minds can absorb and visually accommodate. And of course, such an image of Flaubert, who despised his bourgeois readers, and in no way accommodated them, is ludicrous.

AND CAN ANY of this even be called a theory, unless Scarry is willing to prove that the passages she has discussed are more vivid, more picturable than other passages from literature that do not possess the properties that she seeks? The opening of *Tess* may fulfill Scarry's various terms of picturability, but is it in fact a very vivid passage? It is not, really, at least not compared to, say, the opening of *Dead Souls*. Let Scarry discuss a passage of unvisual Dostoevsky, and argue that, in lacking gauziness or vegetation, or whatever property Scarry deems important for picturability, it is not mentally vivid. She does not do this kind of work anywhere in her book, because she would not be able to prove her speculations. And so her book is less a serious exploration of a big idea than a collection of literary passages that Scarry rather likes (and sometimes very nicely explicates).

It is hard to think of any writer who would see literature as Scarry does, because her thesis so clearly threatens to limit what can be described. The problem begins not with her theory of intention—though it ends there—but with her inadequate aesthetic theory of what detail is for, and her reliance on an idea of literary detail that has too little to do with aesthetics and too much to do with cognitive psychology. It is a vision that sees Flaubert writing like this: "Flaubert begins a piece of narrative motion, adds several color patches, then mixes the colors around so that the motion of distributing the color

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gets mixed in with..." and so on. This is a vision of the mind, and in part of literature, as a computer screen, meshing and rotating three-dimensional colored objects in free space. Scarry's enthrallment to science may explain the rampantly unhistorical nature of her book, in which writers of many different languages and thousands of years apart are considered in the same breath and all in English translations, as if aesthetics had simply been erased. As it has been, of course. For in Scarry's book there is a "deep structure" that would seem to be universal, universally limiting, and hence larger than aesthetics: the mind, and the map given us by cognitive psychology. Such science may be a map of the mind, though even this would seem unprovable; but it is certainly not a map of reading. ■

Scullionspeak

By NICHOLAS HOWE

Beowulf: A New Verse Translation by Seamus Heaney

(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 220 pp., $25)

I.

FOR ALL THAT it seems to begin English literature, *Beowulf* is a relative newcomer to the canon. First edited by a Danish scholar in 1815, the year of Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo and Jane Austen's *Emma*, the poem as a whole was not translated into Modern English until 1837. In subsequent years, *Beowulf* has found numerous translators, many of them scholars and few of them possessing any poetic gift. Of the sixty or so translators who have done the complete poem into English, only two have had any larger literary reputation. William Morris published a version in 1892; and C. K. Scott-Moncrieff, the English translator of Proust, published a version in 1921. But their talents lay elsewhere, and neither produced a *Beowulf* that can be read today with pleasure or even much comprehension.

That the poem made it into the canon, much less into the cliché "from *Beowulf* to Virginia Woolf," is something of a miracle. Unlike most European epics, this poem exists in a single, unadorned manuscript that barely survived a fire in 1731 and today rests, charred edges and all, in the British Library. We know nothing about the manuscript's existence between the early eleventh century, when it was created, and the sixteenth century, when it re-appeared. Most likely it sat unnoticed in a monastic library for centuries, when nobody could read its Old English or, as it is also called, Anglo-Saxon.

That the manuscript did not circulate during these centuries should make us leery of celebrating the poem as the start of the English literary tradition, and also of demonizing it. *Beowulf* never enjoyed the currency and the prestige that Homer or Virgil had in their respective literary canons. It was not discussed in commentaries, or quoted by later writers, or honored as part of a common culture. Indeed, if the single manuscript of *Beowulf* had disappeared when Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries in England—as might easily have happened, given its physical homeliness and its incomprehensible language—we would not have the faintest suspicion that such a poem had ever existed. No other writer mentions the story of Beowulf, even in passing; nor is any part of it embedded in other works.

The mystery around *Beowulf* extends to such basic matters as who composed it and when. No name attaches itself to the poem, not even one of dubious historical veracity like Homer. Nor is any single date commonly accepted for its composition. Reputable scholars have placed it as early as the middle of the seventh century or as late as the beginning of the eleventh century—a period of 350 years or so, about as long as the period that separates *Paradise Lost* from today. It is hard to know if the undateable poem came at the start of the Old English literary period or at its end. We cannot know, therefore, whether it was composed in a culture that had been (at least in recent memory) oral in form and style, or in an increasingly literate culture that made England into a center of Christian learning.

Having neither an author nor a date for *Beowulf* poses problems for scholars, and temptations for translators. This lack of facts leaves them free to render the poem in the image of their various desires. And so translations of the poem range from effusive bardic performances that bear little relation to the original to scholarly transcriptions that are so close to the original that their Modern English makes sense, paradoxically, only to those who know Old English. It is certainly true that there are features of Old English poetry that contribute to any translator's difficulties in rendering *Beowulf* in Modern English.

FOR A START, the poetry in the original is heavily alliterative, so that each line marks out three of its four main metrical stresses with the same initial sound: "and find friendship in the Father's embrace," to borrow an example from Seamus Heaney's version. These days alliteration survives most audibly in rap lyrics and advertising jingles, so the translator of *Beowulf* must use it sparingly and knowingly. Nothing kills a translation faster than relentless alliteration; but nothing can help a good one more than the subtle use of alliterative emphasis, especially if the translator avoids ransacking the language for obscure synonyms to fill out the sound pattern.

More difficult to handle in Modern English than alliteration is the pervasive use in Old English poetry of variation or syntactically parallel expressions to describe the same person or object. Thus, a character in *Beowulf* will describe a king as "lord of the Danes," "king of the Scyldings," "giver of rings," and "famous chief" in three and a half lines of poetry. For the modern reader, accustomed to believing that a poet must use the exact word, Old English poetic variation can seem mindless repetition, the piling up of formulaic expressions to pad out a line, a sure sign that the *Beowulf* poet did not really know what he was doing.

As one reads the poetry, however, variation comes to seem evidence not of ineptitude, but of a desire to display a being or an object in all its richness. The more one reads Old English poetry, the more one senses that variation is what stands in the way of its successful journey into Modern English. Either you cut out some of the variants, and thin out the poem; or you render all of them as they appear, and clog the movement of the narrative. The two poetries seem to find little common ground: the modern is exact and sparing in its inevitability, the early

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medieval is accretive and multitudinous in its generosity. The closest any twentieth-century poet has come to making Old English variation work in Modern English is Geoffrey Hill, in his Anglo-Saxon-inspired cycle called *Mercian Hymns*, which appeared in 1971.

That Old English and Modern English are not all that different at times, especially at the level of vocabulary, also renders the translation of *Beowulf* tricky. Anyone reading through a translation of *Beowulf* soon encounters some term or phrase that seems archaic, but is in fact perfectly good Old English smuggled in by the translator for lack of an adequate equivalent in Modern English. This usually occurs when the poet offers a rich run of variation for warrior gear—shields, helmets, armor, and so on. Without an equivalent technical vocabulary, the Modern English translator has few choices: either pretend that the Old English word for a piece of armor is still current or else invent some metaphoric rendering. Scholarly translators usually go for the first choice, poetic translators for the second choice. Either way, the original gets distorted. Words that are familiar and specific in Old English—such as words for vehicles are in Modern English—are made quaintly archaic or poetically ornate. Of course, such words are neither archaic nor ornate in *Beowulf*. They are as specific to their language, and circulate as easily in it, as do "minivan" or "sport-utility vehicle" in ours.

Seamus Heaney by David Schorr for The New Republic

The markedly episodic shape of the narrative also raises problems for translators. The first two-thirds of *Beowulf*, a little more than two thousand lines, tells of the young Beowulf's journey from his home in Geatland (perhaps modern Sweden) to the court of Hrothgar, king of the Danes. There he vanquishes the monster Grendel, who has raided Hrothgar's hall and eaten his men for years. That victory is followed, the next night, by the appearance of Grendel's Mother, who raids the hall for the first time to avenge her son. In turn, Beowulf tracks her to the underwater cave where she lives, and kills her. These feats accomplished, Beowulf returns home to Geatland where, after a series of events, he becomes king and rules his people well for fifty years.

The poet effects the transition from the young Beowulf to the old Beowulf in ten lines or so, because the intervening years are of little interest compared to the appearance of a dragon that burns Beowulf's hall and ravages his lands. Beowulf must thus prepare himself for a last fight. And, with his young comrade Wiglaf, he defeats the dragon, but not without receiving a fatal wound. His death leaves the Geats without a leader, and without hope of resisting the onslaught of their traditional enemies. In the absence of Beowulf, the Geats face a future of death and captivity. As a poem about two defining moments in a life, *Beowulf* offers little narrative continuity. It places heavy demands on the audience's attention.

II.

ALL THIS SAID, it is hardly surprising that we have had no translation of *Beowulf* to match those of Homer by Richmond Lattimore, Robert Fitzgerald, Christopher Logue, or Robert Fagles, of Virgil by Fitzgerald, of Horace by David Ferry—to cite only recent renderings of dead white European males. Even Dante's *Divine Comedy*, for all its technical virtuosity, has been better rendered in Modern English than *Beowulf*. Readers who know *Beowulf* through the poetic versions of Burton Raffel, Kevin Crossley-Holland, or Michael Alexander may have some sense of its verbal style but little of its forceful directness; and readers of E. Talbot Donaldson's prose version, usually found in the canon-setting *Norton Anthology of English Literature*, know a *Beowulf* that retains the original's powerful narrative but little of its poetic inventiveness.

Now comes, like an "interloper from the Celtic realms," Seamus Heaney and his poetic version of *Beowulf*, intended for use in that same *Norton Anthology* but also appearing in a separate volume with a facing-page Old English text. For the first time, a major poet has taken on *Beowulf*. Heaney is an "interloper" in much the same sense as he meant when he applied the epithet to Yeats. Both are Irish by birth and cultural affinity; both write and read in English; both occupy an uneasy ground.

This crossing of historical and linguistic allegiances has its value for translating *Beowulf*, because the poem shows an analogous kind of crossing. It is written in Old English and was recited to an English audience, but its narrative is set entirely in north Germanic regions of the European continent in the years before the Anglo-Saxons made their migration to the island of Britain. Reading through it, you will never learn that there is in fact such a place as England or such a people as the Anglo-Saxons. Its religious and cultural landscape is pagan or at least pre-Christian, its geography is Scandinavian, and its ethos is distinctly military. It portrays not the Anglo-Saxons in England, as one might expect from an epic poem, but the world of their fathers in the fifth and early sixth centuries.

From the start of his career in the 1960s, Heaney has shown an affinity for Old English poetry. Having studied the language at Queen's University in Belfast, he could shape some of his lines by Old English

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metrical practices, as in "Digging," one of the poems that announced his arrival as a significant voice. In a fine lecture of 1976 on "Englands of the Mind," he located the poetry of Ted Hughes, Philip Larkin, and Geoffrey Hill in the English landscape and poetic tradition. When he spoke of these poets and their desire "to keep open the imagination's supply lines to the past, to receive from the stations of Anglo-Saxon confirmations of ancestry," he was also describing one strand in his own work.

STILL, THERE IS some surprise in reading Heaney's *Beowulf*, because it reverses the process that he described in "Englands of the Mind." In very forthright ways, Heaney's version demands to be read as his connection back to the stations of his Ulster ancestry. And it does so from the very first word of the poem, the Old English interjection "Hwæt." This word has no fixed semantic meaning but serves instead as a call to attention, a signal that something important is about to be said. Our equivalent in a loud or colloquial setting might be "Yo!"; but that would hardly do for the opening of a canonical poem. Recent translators have used "Attend" or "Indeed" or "Yes" or "Hear" for it; older translators used "Lo" or "Hark."

Heaney offers the less literary "So"; and he notes that in his Ulster colloquial, what he lovingly calls "Hiberno-English Scullionspeak," this word "came naturally to the rescue, because in that idiom 'so' operates as an expression which obliterates all previous discourse and narrative, and at the same time functions as an exclamation calling for immediate attention." His rationale for using "So" is precise, even plausible; but one wonders if it holds for those who use other varieties of English. To my ear, "So" sounds too understated, too domestic for the start of a poem such as *Beowulf*. I also hear it with a bit of a Yiddish intonation, an ironic questioning that does not match the poem at all—an inappropriate response, I know, but one that the word carries in my variety of Scullionspeak.

In his translation of the poem's opening, Heaney seems intent to downplay its assertion of epic temporality and heroic achievement: "So. The Spear-Danes in days gone by/and the kings who ruled them had courage and greatness./We have heard of those princes' heroic campaigns." As he levels the diction of these lines and flattens their claims on the audience, Heaney writes two sentences where the original has one grammatical unit. In the original, the subject and the verb of Heaney's second sentence govern the first sentence as well. A recent version of the passage by the scholar Roy Michael Liuzza goes: "Listen! We have heard of the glory in bygone days/of the folk-kings of the Spear-Danes,/how those noble lords did lofty deeds." The original stresses from the start, as does Liuzza's version, that the "we" of the audience knows all the matter of the poem because poets have recited it so others can hear and learn it. Perhaps Heaney thought that splitting the single Old English sentence into two would make for an easier entry. What gets diminished, though, is the ceremonial opening claim, the reminder to the audience that all they know and can know about the past comes from poets.

THAT OPENING ASSERTION matters for the understanding of *Beowulf* and for the appreciation of its style. The poem makes allusive use of the past in ways that speak to the circulation of stories and legends in a traditional culture. Similarly, the poem employs maxims and other terse statements of culturally shared belief. The narrator of the poem and its characters show a gift for the tight laconic expression that speaks to a common sense of how the world works and how one is to live in it. Heaney rightly praises "the cadence and force of earned wisdom" in such passages. To a modern reader, they can seem platitudinous, even trivial, if they are not translated with epigrammatic force. (And some seem so even when they are translated well.) The danger is that the narrator or the characters will seem pompous and verbose in Modern English when, in Old English, they are forceful and direct.

Consider a few examples, taken from high points in the poem. When Beowulf and his band of retainers land in Denmark on their way to help King Hrothgar fight the monster Grendel, they are greeted by a coastguardsman who challenges them. After hearing Beowulf speak, the coastguardsman recognizes that his intentions are honorable and that his status is aristocratic. He adds that learning to judge a man by his words and his works is a survival skill in a warrior culture. In E. Talbot Donaldson's prose version, he says: "A sharp-witted shield-warrior who thinks well must be able to judge each of the two things, words and works." The sentiment is not original to the coastguardsman, and thus its expression can be tight and understated. And that is why it carries conviction in the poem. In Heaney's version, however, the coastguardsman sounds folksy and long-winded: "Anyone with gumption/and a sharp mind will take the measure/of two things: what's said and what's done." This is accurate enough, but it misses the original's proverbial tone, which is at once a stylistic feature of the poem and the coastguardsman's compliment to Beowulf, who is smart enough to get the point even when it is made in a highly elliptical form.

Later in the poem, Grendel's mother comes out of the darkness to avenge the death of her son at Beowulf's hands by killing one of King Hrothgar's beloved comrades. As he tries to encourage Hrothgar after this calamity, Beowulf tells him tersely: "It is better for a man to avenge his friend than to mourn much." The young hero's admonition to the old king risks being disrespectful, and thus it seems to violate protocol, but it is allowed because it is maxim-like in expression. He is saying what anyone in the culture must know, and so he says it as simply as possible. Heaney gets the sentiment right, but in ways that make it seem platitudinous and thus offensive in context: "It is always better / to avenge dear ones than to indulge in mourning." This misses the force of Beowulf's words: that the old king, for all that he mourns, needs only a glancing reminder that his duty is to seek revenge. To say "indulge in mourning" makes the point obvious to the modern reader, but it also makes Beowulf less hard-bitten than he must be at this moment.

HEANEY SEEMS THROUGHOUT to resist the tight, compressed style of *Beowulf*. It is not that his version has more lines or even more words than the original, though the latter is almost unavoidable, but that it seems looser and less edgy as it moves forward line by line. Yet there is one extended section in Heaney's *Beowulf* in which he brilliantly captures this poetic style. As he renders the so-called "Finnsburg Episode," a poem within the poem told by a performer in Hrothgar's court, Heaney moves powerfully and accurately from Old to Modern English, as in these lines:

> Wind and water
> raged with storms,
> wave and shingle
> were shackled in ice
> until another year
> appeared in the yard
> as it does to this day,
> the seasons constant,
> the wonder of light
> coming over us.

Heaney rightly notes that his version of this passage is marked "by a slight quickening of pace and a shortening of metrical rein." Perhaps a translation of all 3,182 lines of *Beowulf* in this style would prove unreadable. Still, these lines do sound truer to the original than other parts of Heaney's translation, precisely because they avoid being tediously explicit or drawn out. Here we are not burdened

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with an overly long line that uses more language than it needs to render the original.

The overly long line is especially evident in passages in which Heaney has to translate the original's use of variation or apposition. In his introduction, he admits to slighting this aspect of the poem's style. His frankness is winning, but it cannot obscure the fact that some of the dullest lines in his rendering are the consequence of this slighting of variation, as here: "Then he saw a blade that boded well,/a sword in her armoury, an ancient heirloom/from the days of the giants, an ideal weapon,/one that any warrior would envy...." This kind of passage may not sound like poetry to us, but passages like it appear throughout *Beowulf*. To make them work in Modern English, the translator needs to do more than dutifully fill out the list of synonyms. There needs to be also a sense of why the poet clusters so many synonyms at that particular moment in the poem.

Writing about any translation means judging it for its faithfulness to the original as well as for the quality of its own expression. It also means looking at local moments and large passages. As Heaney once remarked, in an essay on John Clare: "I am reminded of a remark made once by an Irish diplomat with regard to the wording of a certain document. 'This,' he said, 'is a minor point of major importance.'" In the judgment of translation, certainly, minor points have major importance; and to my ear Heaney's translation tends to flatten or to elongate the Old English line, to make it seem heavy with words rather than direct and flowing with alliterative stress and verbal energy. His *Beowulf* sounds at times more like some poetry of medieval Ireland than it does like that of Anglo-Saxon England, and this is not unrelated to Heaney's objective as a translator.

III.

THERE IS ONE thing that Heaney's *Beowulf* does better than any other translation of the poem that I know. The most moving and powerful moments of his translation appear in the speeches delivered by characters during the last third of the poem. This section takes place fifty years into the reign of Beowulf. His triumphs over Grendel and Grendel's mother are in the distant past; all that remains is the final contest. In these speeches, which are addressed at least as much to the audience as to other characters, we hear a wise and weary Beowulf, a man who knows that his time on earth is nearing its end. But first he must fight and defeat the dragon who has burned his hall and ravaged his land, even though that fight will likely end in his death and thus, because he leaves no heir, in a new peril for his people.

After killing the dragon and receiving a mortal wound in exchange, the king takes the measure of his life:

> No king
> of any neighbouring clan would dare
> face me with troops, none had the power
> to intimidate me. I stood my ground
> and took what came, cared for things in
> my keeping,
> never fomented quarrels, never
> swore to a lie.

The note here is exact: the voice of the old Beowulf seems not so much translated by Heaney into Modern English as ventriloquized into it. The record of a life is finely caught in the dignified, modest assertions of half-lines such as "I stood my ground" or "and took what came." These are almost uncannily accurate renderings of Old English poetic form, especially of direct speech. In such passages, when Heaney seems to enter characters such as the old Beowulf, he finds the right melody for translating Old English.

To expect that Heaney would work at this level throughout would be unfair. And here it may also matter that his translation originated as a commission for the *Norton Anthology of English Literature*. A translation meant for students encountering *Beowulf* for the first time probably should prefer the clear and the accurate over the brilliant and the allusive. Some of the passages that I have criticized for being overly explicit can also be read as attempts to explain the poem to first-time readers. Yet the rationale for the translation is not that simple, despite Heaney's gracious acknowledgement of assistance from various medievalists. What complicates Heaney's translation, and in many ways makes it deeply interesting as a contemporary statement on literature and politics, as a redress of poetry, is that he sets out to make the poem Irish.

At the most immediate level, this means that Heaney is willing to use various words that are current in the English of Ulster but do not circulate widely if at all in the standard English of either England or North America. Some of these words are survivals from Old English that have lasted in Ulster but not elsewhere, such as the verb "thole," meaning "to suffer." Others are forms current in Ulster English that Heaney sets into his translation carefully and sparingly, but also polemically: "bothies," "war-graith," "bawn," "keens," "brehon," "wean," and "hoked." Even if you know Old English, many of these words are puzzling and intrusive, for they introduce an element of what one might call political dialect into the Modern English version that is not in the Old English version. The original does not use words from one specific dialect to make a larger political and poetic claim. What Heaney does with words such as "bawn," "brehon," and "hoked" is his own remaking of the poem. That they are mystifying, at least at the immediate level, is admitted by the practice of the *Norton Anthology* in glossing these words with notes, some written by Heaney.

Adding words that need glossing to a translation when there are reasonably usable words at hand is a provocative

Monet's Haystacks

It's strange that our love of Beauty should lead us to hell.
I caught one glimpse of you, and a moment later
My house and books were all thrown into the fire.

There is always terror near the Quiet Garden,
There is a fatty dragon near the Beloved.
He has tons of gold at the back of his house.

The horses of sorrow are always restless, breaking
Out of fences, trampling the neighbors' garden.
The best poems are written by pirates in the moonlight.

When Monet glimpsed the haystack shining in fall dawn,
Knowing that despair and reason live in the same house,
He cried out: "I have loved God!" And he had.

I walked down the aisles of the grocery weeping.
Gleams of light came off my hair when I saw you
And I found myself instantly under the horses' hooves.

My improvidence was to have been too hopeful.
My improvidence was not to see the fall.
I apologize to those in hell for my disturbances.

Robert Bly

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thing to do. I think that the method would have been far more successful if Heaney had gone all the way and written a fully Ulsterized version of *Beowulf*, instead of a version that stands at times awkwardly between a textbook version for undergraduates and a remaking of the poem to gather in his own heritage. Heaney's *Beowulf* would have been far more exciting if it had followed the practice of Derek Walcott's *Omeros*, and traveled the full and exhilarating distance from translation to poetic remaking.

WHY DIDN'T HEANEY do so? It is hard for a reader to say. What can be usefully explored is how this version of *Beowulf* relates to other aspects of Heaney's career. Over the last several years, Heaney has located his fascination with Old English poetry in the figure of the Anglo-Saxon poet Caedmon. Lamenting the death of Ted Hughes, he wrote: "This modern poet from Yorkshire who published in the 1960s a poem called 'The Bull Moses' would have had no difficulty hitting it off with Caedmon, the first English poet, who began life as a farmhand in Northumbria, a fellow northerner with a harp under one arm and a bundle of fodder under the other." It is a lovely image of the poet: a harp and a bundle of fodder. It reminds one vividly of some of Heaney's early poems about his youth in rural Ulster where, as a Catholic in a Protestant region, he sometimes seemed to be more at home with the countryside and its creatures than with most of his fellow citizens. It is a fine image, this poet with harp and fodder; but it is not an accurate image of Caedmon and it may not be fair to Hughes either, who was a learned poet in his terrifying way.

Heaney's retelling of the Caedmon story matters a great deal to his intentions as a translator of *Beowulf* and, more radically, to his use of the poem to graft himself onto the English literary tradition. It also matters to some of his most obvious moves as a translator, especially his use of Ulster vocabulary. The story of Caedmon first appears in 731 in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English Church and People*, and this fact alone should make one hesitate to treat him simply as a bucolic harper. Bede records that Caedmon was a cowherd at the monastery at Whitby, who would withdraw from the drinking when the harp circulated and his turn to sing came round. One night, after slipping away and tending to his animals, Caedmon fell asleep and dreamed that a mysterious figure ordered him to sing a song. Puzzled but awestruck, Caedmon asked of what he should sing, and was told to sing of God and His Creation. The result, spontaneous but technically perfect, is known today as "Caedmon's Hymn."

Bede also tells us that once the cowherd's gifts were recognized, the abbess of the monastery ordered the learned monks to read the Bible to him so he could meditate on these readings like (in Bede's image) a cow chewing its cud and then retell them in traditional vernacular verse.

At that moment, Caedmon ceased to be a cowherd. He matters as the first English poet because he put the oral bard out of business when he became the mouthpiece for a highly literate tradition of Scripture. But Heaney prefers to read Caedmon as the bard who stands "as a reminder of the daemonic strengths of the art, its covenant with the singing voice of Orpheus, the sheer spellbinding power of rhythmic speech," as he recently wrote in *The Threepenny Review*. His preeminent recent example of such a poet is Dylan Thomas.

Perhaps so, but to make the comparison work, to invent a lineage from Caedmon to Dylan Thomas and Ted Hughes and, implicitly but no less firmly to himself and to his translation of *Beowulf*, Heaney has to forget that Caedmon matters because he composed thoroughly orthodox poems in English to persuade pagan Anglo-Saxons to renounce their faith and their culture in order to become good and dutiful Christians. Caedmon is an agent of conversion, of Christian conversion, which means that he is an agent of cultural betrayal. Whichever way one reads him, he is the figure who makes poetry the vehicle for a written scriptural tradition that has little place, or no place at all, for the bardic Orpheus.

Heaney loves his version of Caedmon, so fervently that he makes me want to believe and love it, too. One of his strongest recent poems begins: "Caedmon too I was lucky to have known." This Caedmon is the bard who beneath the learned poet remains unspoiled and earthy: "And all that time he'd been poeting with the harp / His real gift was the big ignorant roar / He could still let out of him, just bogging in / As if the sacred subjects were a herd / That had broken out and needed rounding up." Heaney ends on a note of vernacular praise: "Oh, Caedmon was the real thing all right." This evocation of the Old English poet is alluring, and it is designed to advance Heaney's own ends as a poet. For this particular poem is called "Whitby-sur-Moyola," the first name being the site of Caedmon's monastery in the north of England and the second being a river that flows near Heaney's childhood home in the north of Ireland. The French preposition between the place-names looks forward and backward to the arrival of the Normans in 1066, another part of Heaney's heritage.

Whitby-sur-Moyola belongs on the most beautiful of maps, in the atlas of imaginary places, because it is a fictive setting for the tension that has driven Heaney's poetry from the start. And this tension can also be felt in his *Beowulf*, as he acknowledged proudly in his lecture on translating the poem, "The Drag of the Golden Chain." Irish by birth, English by language, a partisan of neither side in the religious troubles of Ireland, Heaney can find no spot in the real atlas to fix his poetic home. And so Whitby-sur-Moyola is a place deeply attractive in its gesture toward political, cultural, linguistic, and religious harmony.

Yet Whitby-sur-Moyola is a curious place to work from as a translator of *Beowulf*. One might even argue that someone writing from there is not really a translator of the poem at all. He is, rather, a reinventor of the poem, who turns Old English into Modern English to remake the literary and cultural history of the British Isles. And there is an argument in this remaking. The argument is that there is a deep affinity between the Anglo-Saxon and the Celtic, between two peoples and traditions that have rarely been at peace with each other from the time when the Germanic tribes arrived on the island of Britain in the fifth century A.D.

One can only roar like Heaney's Caedmon at the irony of a revisionist *Beowulf* appearing in that most canonical of textbooks, the *Norton Anthology*; but for Heaney's purposes, where better than a textbook that will assure his *Beowulf* of several generations of readers? Or one would roar at this irony if Heaney had really rewritten *Beowulf* to be the poem of Whitby-sur-Moyola. As it is, he has added some Celtic echoes to an Old English poem because that can be, in his words, "one way for an Irish poet to come to terms with that complex history of conquest and colony, absorption and resistance, integrity and antagonism" that has characterized Anglo-Irish relations since the time when the Irish burned the poet Edmund Spenser out of Ireland and back to Elizabeth's court.

As a translator, Heaney does not work forward from the start of a literary tradition, as a scholar might. He looks back from his moment in that tradition, as a poet seeking out connections, trying to refashion the Old English in ways that can disturb a scholar, but always locating his poetry and his history on his own grounds. The result is a *Beowulf* that is sometimes deeply exciting to read for its energy, for its allegiance to the colloquial and idiomatic rather than the academic and official, for its sometimes astonishing acts of ventriloquism in rendering some of the characters' speeches into Modern English. Whether this makes it as well into a good

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translation is a more complicated matter, because Heaney sometimes seems at a loss to render some of the poem's most essential stylistic features.

For reasons that have as much to do with its virtues as with poetic reputation and publishing houses, Heaney's *Beowulf* is likely to be the most commonly read version of the poem over the next few years. In its thrilling passages, it reads better than any other translation that we have; and in its dullest passages, it is no worse than many others. Does it belong with the best recent translations from Latin and Greek? Probably not. For that *Beowulf*, we await a translator who has worked deeply through Old English poetic style and who has thus, in Geoffrey Hill's words, "exchanged gifts with the Muse of History." ■

The fitful history of French Jewry.

The Ordeal of Legitimacy

By David A. Bell

Has France been good for the Jews? The history of the last century or so makes it hard to say yes. The images are indelible: the falsely accused Jewish army officer Alfred Dreyfus being ritually stripped of his rank in the courtyard of the École Militaire, his insignia ripped off and his sword broken while crowds howled "Death to the Jews!" outside; Vichy French police, without direct orders from the Nazis, rounding up Jews, imprisoning them in an indoor bicycle racetrack, and then putting thousands on trains to Auschwitz (owing to Vichy's willing cooperation with Hitler's executioners, a quarter of the French Jewish population perished in the Holocaust); violent attacks on Jewish cemeteries, restaurants, and synagogues in the 1970s and 1980s; Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of a political party that routinely polls over fifteen percent of the French vote, calling the gas chambers a "detail" in the history of the war.

Actually, the balance sheet is far more ambiguous. For all its history of anti-Semitism, France was also the first European country to grant the Jews full civil rights—not just in France itself, but also in the vast territories conquered by Napoleon. Indeed, the Jews of nineteenth-century France enjoyed such a high level of success and acceptance—including access to elite universities and high government offices—that they set about refashioning the Jews of other countries in their own image, in a Jewish version of France's *mission civilisatrice*. As for the overall success of Jews in French society, recall only the names Émile Durkheim, Camille Pissarro, Léon Blum, Marc Bloch, Pierre Mendès-France, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Raymond Aron, and Jacques Derrida, not to mention (stretching the definition of Jewishness) Sarah Bernhardt, Michel Debré, and Marcel Proust.

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The Jews of France: A History from Antiquity to the Present
by Esther Benbassa
translated by M. B. DeBevoise
(Princeton University Press, 227 pp., $29.95)

Jewish Destinies: Citizenship, State and Community in Modern France
by Pierre Birnbaum
translated by Arthur Goldhammer
(Hill and Wang, 288 pp., $35)

Uneasy Asylum: France and the Jewish Refugee Crisis, 1933–1942
by Vicki Caron
(Stanford University Press, 735 pp., $65)

The Jews of Modern France
by Paula E. Hyman
(University of California Press, 278 pp., $16.95)

Nationalism, Anti-Semitism and Fascism in France
by Michel Winock
translated by Jane Marie Todd
(Stanford University Press, 366 pp., $55)

But the story does not end there, either. There is still a sense in which the history of French Jewry has been peculiarly, even uniquely, unsettling. More clearly than the history of any other Jewish community, it throws into sharp relief the fact that modern anti-Semitism cannot be comfortably dismissed as a primitive relic of ancient hatreds, or as an atavistic, irrational reaction against modern society. It derives from tensions that lie at the heart of the modern nation-state, and also of modern democracy. Pierre Birnbaum and Michel Winock are achingly aware of this point in their new books. Indeed, Birnbaum despairs at French Jews ever successfully negotiating the contradictions of modernity, and ends his book with a deeply bleak assessment of their present and future, asserting that on the "path that led them from Biblical times to the dawn of modern history," they are now heading the wrong way, and backwards. His pessimism is ultimately unconvincing, and reflects an ideal of assimilation that was always something of a myth; but the history of French Jewry makes it at least understandable.

Americans often have trouble grasping the issues that haunt Birnbaum, owing to the fortunate history of our own nation-state and democracy. All modern democratic nations have demanded a degree of conformity and homogeneity from their citizens: a commitment to common principles and, to some extent, participation in a common culture. But the vast majority of Americans descend from men and women who freely chose to come here, and so the United States has been able to afford an unusually large degree of cultural heterogeneity without its national unity coming into question. Americans may take loud pride in their ethnic origins without easily incurring charges of dual loyalties. The classic canard of modern anti-Semitism (it originated, incidentally, in France) is that the Jews are "a state within a state"; but which group, in the United States, is *not* a state within a state? The American revolutionaries helped matters further at the start by ruthlessly driving out the Loyalists, who might otherwise have constituted a per-

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manent challenge to our national identity—an historical episode of which most Americans know little, but then, as Renan remarked, a nation is defined as much by what it collectively forgets as by what it collectively remembers. Not surprisingly, the greatest challenges to American national identity have arisen in connection with the African American minority whose ancestors did not freely travel to these shores.

The situation of France has been dramatically different. Far from enjoying any degree of consensus about common principles, France has perceived itself, from 1789 until quite recently, as a nation rent in two, between supporters of the Catholic, traditional, Old Regime, and advocates of the French Revolution. The most lyrical expounder of this view, the great Romantic historian Augustin Thierry, projected the division back onto the whole of French history, seeing it prefigured even in the conflict between conquering Franks and vanquished Gauls in the fifth century. "We think we are a single nation," he wrote evocatively, "but we are two nations on the same land, two nations at war in their memories and irreconcilable in their hopes." And unlike Britain, Spain, or indeed any other major European state, France has faced no serious threat of regional secession for centuries. (Except in Corsica, recent regional militantism has been largely an academic affair.) The threats to its national unity are not physical, in the sense of the country literally splitting in two; the threats are cultural and political.

As a result, not only the reactionary right in France, but also the republican left, have long been obsessed with cultural homogeneity to an extent that Americans tend to find bewildering. While it is a leading nation of immigration (one out of every four French citizens has at least one foreign-born grandparent), France has no tradition of celebrating immigration, still less ethnic groups maintaining distinct identities. Indeed, as Birnbaum points out, the very word "ethnic," in the American sense, only entered the French language recently. The antipathies of both the reactionary right and the republican left have always focused principally on each other—yet both have also fixated on those members of the French community who have differed most obviously from the cultural norm, and seemed most threatening to it. Which brings us back to the Jews.

FOR AS LONG as Jews have lived in France, they have aroused a powerful mixture of fascination, fear, admiration, and disgust in their gentile neighbors. As Esther Benbassa recounts in her dry but impressively succinct and informative history, they arrived in the Roman province of Gaul in the first centuries of the common era, and soon found themselves trod underfoot by the ascendant Christian church. They could not hold public office or own Christian slaves, and had to fend off accusations of treachery. Even under the favorably disposed Charlemagne, Jewish litigants needed two or three times as many witnesses as Christians when going to court.

It did not help that the Jewish community itself was almost continuously divided. In its earliest days, prominent exiles from Judea rubbed shoulders with Jews who had arrived from other parts of the diaspora, descended in many cases from non-Judean converts. In the High Middle Ages, northern French Jews loyal to the traditions of the eleventh-century French commentator Rashi and his heirs fought against currents in Provençal Jewry influenced by Greco-Arab philosophy and its great Jewish interlocutor Maimonides. (In 1233, the feuding reached the point that the northerners denounced Maimonides's *Guide to the Perplexed* to Dominican monks, who burned the book in public.) Yet even a united Jewish community could not have prevented the persecutions of the times; and although French Jews largely escaped the horrific massacres carried out by Crusaders in Germany, a series of expulsions nonetheless brought their history to a temporary end by the late fourteenth century.

EVENTUALLY THEY CAME back. Marrano merchants from Portugal and Spain settled in Bordeaux and Bayonne, and by the middle of the seventeenth century they felt secure enough to drop the pretense of Catholicism, ceasing to notify local priests of their births, deaths, and marriages. Jews lived in towns under papal rule in Provence (the astrologer Nostradamus was descended from one such family), and also in the newly annexed eastern territories of Alsace and Lorraine. But the age of discrimination was hardly over. When the Marranos finally received official toleration from the French crown in 1723, it was only in return for a payment of 100,000 French pounds. The Alsatian city of Colmar levied a notorious tax on Jews and cattle entering its walls. In Provence, the Jews lived in ghettos and were forced to wear yellow hats. All French Jews remained ineligible for public office, though one did manage to buy a barony in Picardy, and with it the feudal right to name the local parish priest.

Such was the lot of Jews across Europe, and the temptation is great to write it off to the continent's backward and unenlightened condition. But the Jews did not always fare better in the writings of the apostles of toleration and modernity. Voltaire denounced the "raging fanaticism in their hearts," and slandered them in more than a quarter of the articles of his *Philosophical Dictionary*. Diderot impugned them as a "superstitious and ignorant people." Were these writers (and they were hardly alone) simply echoing a primitive, age-old anti-Semitism? The historian Ronald Schechter has convincingly argued that the Enlightenment's concern with the Jews derived rather from a generalized hostility toward organized religion, and also from a suspicious amazement that the Jews had so long managed to remain a distinct and cohesive community, separate from their host nations.

IRONICALLY, THIS COHESIVENESS made the Jews (despite their lack of a national territory) seem the very model of a nation at the moment when French nationalism itself was beginning to take shape. Thus Rousseau lavishly praised Moses for turning "a swarm of unhappy fugitives into a political body, a free people.... He gave it this durable form.... which five thousand years have not been able to destroy or even alter, and which even today retains all its strength." This image of the Jews has endured, but it has rarely been proposed in Rousseau's spirit of admiration. In 1905, for instance, the polemicist Urbain Gohier wrote (in a passage quoted by Winock) that "although dispersed across the surface of the earth, the twelve million Jews compose the only homogeneous, and the most resolutely nationalist, nation." Gohier made the observation in *The Jewish Terror*, an extraordinarily vile book even by the standards of French anti-Semitism at the time of the Dreyfus affair, which argued that the presence of a distinct Jewish community on French soil threatened French national identity. In the next sentence, Gohier lashed out at the Jews for their "extraordinary discipline in the acquisition of universal dominion."

Many other French voices have echoed these charges, and stories about the all-powerful Jewish internationale can still be found in publications available at any Parisian kiosk, such as *Présent* and *Minute*. This sort of conspiracy-theorizing is hardly unique to French anti-Semites. What is remarkable about modern French Jewish history, however, is that the specter of the Jews constituting a separate nation within the nation has been at the heart of nearly *all* political discussion of the Jews, not only on the ultra-Catholic Right, but on the ultra-secular Left as

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well; for philo-Semites as much as anti-Semites. The idea that the Jews might legitimately remain a separate community in certain respects, while still participating fully in the life of the nation, an idea elaborated in Germany as far back as the eighteenth century by Moses Mendelssohn and W.C. Dohm, and central to the history of American Jewry, has historically enjoyed almost no resonance in France. Birnbaum, Benbassa, and Paula Hyman, in her excellent general history of modern French Jewry, are all firmly in accord on this point, and illustrate it at length.

AT THE TIME of the French Revolution, for instance, the leading advocate of Jewish emancipation, the Lorraine priest Henri Grégoire, called for the Jews to be "melted into the national mass"—to lose all their distinctiveness, including even their religious distinctiveness. For Grégoire, the solution to the "Jewish problem" lay, ultimately, in conversion. And when it came to the differences between the Jews and their neighbors, Grégoire himself could sound like the worst sort of anti-Semite, describing the Jews "pullulating" in "sad hovels from which foul odors continually emanate" (although he noted that this condition was due to anti-Semitism, and added that "in their place we would perhaps have been worse"). Not surprisingly, while French Jews have traditionally hailed Grégoire as an emancipator, today a large portion of them bridle at honoring him in any way, ironically putting themselves in the same camp as the ultra-Catholics who detest the priest for his Jacobinism, and for his break with Rome.

When the revolutionary Constituent Assembly voted to give the Jews full civil rights at the end of the eighteenth century, it was explicitly on the condition that they renounce their distinctive privileges, laws, and customs. In 1789, the Comte de Clermont-Tonnerre declared in debate that "everything must be refused to the Jews as a Nation in the sense of a corporate body and everything granted to the Jews as individuals.... They must make up neither a political body nor an order within the State; they must individually be citizens." The assembly first granted rights to the small, wealthy, and relatively assimilated Sephardic community in the Southwest, but it waited another year and a half before extending the decree to the more numerous, Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazi Jews of Alsace and Lorraine, who lived principally as impoverished peddlers and moneylenders in villages that resembled the shtetl of Central and Eastern Europe. Meanwhile the arguments of the Comte de Mirabeau, an enthusiastic follower of Mendelssohn's position on Jewish emancipation, and one of the rare French advocates of genuine pluralism, found almost no audience.

Ever since, the French left and moderate center have repeatedly expressed their horror at the slightest hint of Jewish separatism. Before the Dreyfus affair, this attitude easily slid into raw anti-Semitism, even on the part of Jean Jaurès, the icon of French socialism, whom Winock quotes damningly on the Jewish "fever for profit." After Dreyfus, to be sure, anti-Semitism became politically incorrect on the left, but the change did nothing to diminish the fear of the "nation within the nation." Paula Hyman recounts a particularly telling incident from 1907, when French Socialists condemned the government for allowing children in the Marais district of Paris, then inhabited almost entirely by immigrant Jews, to attend neighborhood schools. These schools had exactly the same curriculum as every other public school in France, and taught exclusively in French. And yet the Socialist daily *L'Humanité* warned that simply by virtue of being educated together, the Jewish children would "form a closed caste and later ... a very distinct society scarcely penetrable by the customs of modern life... How can we be surprised at racial hatred when ... the administration itself favors the particularist development of these races instead of seeking to facilitate their fusion, even from childhood?"

AS RECENTLY AS twenty years ago, French Jews had another vivid and painful reminder of the mainstream French tendency to conflate the smallest manifestations of Jewish difference with separatism. In October 1980, terrorists exploded a bomb outside the synagogue in the rue Copernic in Paris, killing six people, including gentile passersby. Centrist Prime Minister Raymond Barre rushed to condemn the "odious act," but he added that it was an act "which intended to strike Jews going to synagogue and which struck innocent Frenchmen crossing the rue Copernic." Barre is in no way an anti-Semite. In fact, he is one of the most decent and honorable of French politicians. And his general decency just makes the remark all the more telling and awful: even Barre, in a moment of stress, instinctively distinguished between Jews going to synagogue and "innocent Frenchmen."

Of course, Barre's remarks hardly compare to the astonishingly virulent anti-Semitism of the prewar nationalist right. Whereas figures on the left and center have believed that Jewish assimilation is possible, and rarely condemned Judaism itself, the right-wing anti-Semites combined traditional bigotry with a fervent conviction that Jews could never truly become French. As Birnbaum points out, these anti-Semites loathed the assimilated Jews far more than the Orthodox immigrants who really did live in "closed societies"; in the paranoid fantasies of French reaction, the assimilated Jews were perpetrating a dangerous deception in disguising their true, malevolent natures. It is no coincidence, Birnbaum continues, that the two most hated Jews in French history have been examples of extreme assimilation: the right-wing army officer Alfred Dreyfus (who, it has been remarked, in other circumstances would have made a natural anti-Dreyfusard), and the secular socialist Léon Blum, who was prime minister under the Popular Front in the 1930s.

It was under the aggressively secular Third Republic (1870–1940) that the Catholic French right felt most beleaguered, and most despairing about French national identity; and it was largely for this reason that French anti-Semitism grew enormously potent during this period. As George Mosse once remarked, looking at pre-World-War-I France and Germany without benefit of hindsight, it was France that seemed more likely to produce National Socialism. Germany, after all, had no Dreyfus affair. And it had no Edouard Drumont, the publicist and politician who has as good a claim as any to be called the father of modern anti-Semitism.

DRUMONT'S ANTI-SEMITISM was so intensely pathological, Winock writes, that when a flood drove him out of his Paris apartment in 1910, he racked his brains until he found a way of blaming the Jews: he attributed the rising river waters to deforestation financed by cousins of the Rothschilds. Yet his influence was immense. His book *La France juive*, published in 1886 by Flammarion (still a leading French publisher), went through 145 editions within a year and sold millions of copies. It was the mother of all conspiracy tracts. As Drumont wrote, "everything comes back to the Jew." To Drumont's followers, Dreyfus's supposed betrayal of France to the Germans, and later Blum's rise to the premiership, confirmed all their worst suspicions, and gave to their already zealous convictions the intensity of a religious cult.

It is true, as Birnbaum observes, that Drumont's feverish language rarely translated into actual violence before 1940 (and even Vichy mostly left the dirty work of killing Jews to the Germans). More Italian immigrants than Jews died at the hands of street-level French bigots—and the same, incidentally, has been true of

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Arab immigrants in recent years. Still, anti-Italian and anti-Arab sentiment have never suffused French politics and culture as anti-Semitism did before and during World War II. Winock illustrates this point in painful detail, in his discussion of Drumont and also in his fine essays on left-wing anti-Semitism, on Céline's obsession with the Jews, on the Catholic writer Georges Bernanos's lack of such an obsession (despite his veneration for Drumont), and on the way anti-Semitic publicists constructed an image of Joan of Arc as a sort of perfectly pure and perfectly French anti-Jew. Winock calls anti-Semitism "the most solid cement" of French nationalism in general. It is a statement that badly needs complication, since it does not really apply to the 1870s, or to the period of the First World War, when the Germans aroused far more nationalist anger in France; but it does fit the 1890s, when the Dreyfus affair occurred, and the 1930s, when anti-Semitic hatred found targets both in Blum and in the thousands of Jewish refugees from Germany and Eastern Europe who sought asylum in France.

THE POOR TREATMENT that these refugees received has recently emerged as a significant topic for historians. Some have gone so far as to draw a straight line between French attitudes and policies towards Jewish refugees before 1940 and the fate of French Jews in general thereafter. They have thereby deepened the indictment, developed most fully by Robert Paxton and Michael Marrus in *Vichy France and the Jews* in 1981, that French authorities, weaned on homegrown anti-Semitism and tacitly supported by much of the population, participated willingly in the Holocaust. As Marshall Pétain's own chief of staff damningly remarked after the war: "Germany was not at the origin of the anti-Jewish legislation of Vichy. This legislation was, if I dare say it, spontaneous, native."

The indictment has so shaken French political culture in recent years that right-wing academics have blamed it for damaging French national identity, while the historian Henri Rousso has diagnosed postwar France as suffering from "the Vichy Syndrome." But did all roads really lead to Vichy? It is this question that makes Vicki Caron's detailed and quietly authoritative history of the refugee crisis so important. Caron in no way denies that Vichy had deep indigenous roots, and that its policies, particularly the establishment of its wretched internment camps, were built on foundations that were established in the previous decade. She brilliantly describes the absurd plight of the refugees who, trapped in a juridical no-man's land, found themselves denounced first as Fifth Columnists acting on Hitler's orders and later as anti-German warmongers seeking to undermine France's wise policy of appeasement.

And yet Caron correctly insists on drawing a fundamental distinction between the imperfect democracy of the 1930s and the reactionary, collaborationist regime that followed, which came into being only thanks to the Nazis. Before 1940, as Caron shows, anti-Semitism met with loud and often successful opposition, and the refugees received a great deal of support from the government and public opinion alike, particularly under Blum's Popular Front. It was only when the Nazis gave power to Edouard Drumont's faithful readers that this support was wrenched away, paving the way for 76,000 French Jews, two-thirds of them foreign-born, to perish. Caron's work should be a model for future historians. France's record with regard to the Jews is disturbing enough; historians do not need to distort it by presenting it as nothing but an arrow pointing straight to the wartime persecutions and deportations.

STILL, IT IS hardly surprising that many French Jews, faced with suspicion of Jewish particularism across the political spectrum and with virulent right-wing anti-Semitism, have historically reacted by embracing a version of assimilation that stopped only at the church door. From the early nineteenth century until fairly recently, many even chose not to describe themselves as *Juifs*, a word which to them evoked the "closed societies" of the past (and which gentiles used as a slur), preferring the supposedly more neutral term *Israélites*. From Napoleon onwards, leading French rabbis accommodated themselves to the demands of assimilation, citing the ancient rabbinical maxim *dina d'malkhuta dina*, or the law of the kingdom is the law, to justify such measures as French Jewish soldiers fighting on the Sabbath and eating non-kosher food. Hyman and Benbassa both note that French Jews in the 1930s were so determined to appear as patriotic French citizens that they permitted the right-wing anti-Semitic Croix de Feu movement to parade through the Synagogue de la Victoire in Paris in ceremonies honoring the dead of World War I. And so strident were the voices denouncing Blum's premiership as a "foreign yoke" that Blum himself felt the need to declare, pathetically, that "I was born in Paris ... of French parents ... My four grandparents were all born in France.... As far as it is possible to trace the outlines of my modest family's history, my ancestry is purely French." (Even today, the French Jewish historian Benbassa feels obliged in her book to deny the reality of Judeo-Masonic conspiracies, and to insist that Jews "represented no danger" to French workers. What does she think her French readers believe?)

FOR OVER A century, these Jewish anxieties about acceptance have been further reinforced by something that all these books mention, but which only Paula Hyman appropriately emphasizes: the constant demographic renewal of French Jewry by means of immigration. At the time of the French Revolution, the Yiddish-speaking Jews of Alsace and Lorraine still seemed "foreign" even to their assimilated Sephardic brethren in Bordeaux and Bayonne. A hundred years later, they had largely abandoned Yiddish for French, moved to the cities, and joined the middle classes; but no sooner did their assimilation seem complete than waves of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe began to arrive.

By 1872, a quarter of all Jews in Paris were foreign born, and by 1939 an absolute majority of France's 300,000 Jews belonged to the new groups. Since World War II, the process has repeated itself, as Sephardic immigrants from France's former North African colonies have again doubled the French Jewish population. As a result, French Jewish history somewhat resembles a permanent performance of *Our Crowd*, with not all that much having changed since wealthy and assimilated Bordeaux Sephardim wrote to the revolutionary National Assembly to protest their fundamental differences from the alien Ashkenazi Alsatians ("The Portugese [Jews], except for their religious belief, differ in no respect from the peoples among whom they live; ... but a German Jew is German everywhere with regard to his customs"). Raymond Aron once quipped that he felt "less distant from an anti-Semitic Frenchman than from a South Moroccan Jew who speaks no language but Arabic and is barely removed from what looks to me like the Middle Ages."

And yet, given the persistence of French anti-Semitism, these attitudes were never really sustainable. As Birnbaum notes, Aron himself felt driven to express solidarity with his fellow Jews after hearing Charles de Gaulle, at the time of the Six-Day War, denounce the Jewish people as "sure of themselves and domineering." Émile Durkheim, born David Durkheim and descended from a long line of rabbis, had a similar experience at the time of the Dreyfus affair. And in the past twenty years, a series of incidents has forced yet another generation of assimilated Jews to

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confront their Jewish identity: the rue Copernic bombing and Prime Minister Barre's comments; the rise of Le Pen's National Front; and most powerfully, the desecration of the Jewish cemetery of Carpentras in 1990, in which a corpse was disinterred and stabbed through the anus with an umbrella, causing widespread horror.

These recent incidents are on an entirely different scale from Vichy or the Dreyfus affair, but they nonetheless seem to have marked a turning point in the history of French Jewry. Birnbaum claims that they have led to nothing less than the collapse of the traditional republican model of assimilation. Since Carpentras, he writes, Jews and gentiles alike have again begun to treat French Jews less as individual citizens and more as a collective. Certainly the assimilationist term *Israélite* has fallen largely into disuse. France's Grand Rabbi, a North African Sephardi, has asserted a greater role for Jewish communal institutions, and even challenged the sacrosanct principle of secular education. And Jews have collectively played a major role in forcing the French to confront and atone for Vichy, culminating in President Jacques Chirac's public apology for the French state's "unforgiveable crimes" in 1995.

STILL, THE HUGE response to the Carpentras incident notwithstanding, the collapse of the republican model has less to do with continuing anti-Semitism than with broader changes in French political culture as a whole. Since World War II, and the discrediting of the traditional right in the wake of the Liberation, the polarization of the French into warring political camps has vastly diminished. French unity has come to seem less fragile, and so cultural homogeneity has no longer seemed quite so urgent a task. Since the student revolts of 1968, the idea of a missionary state using the educational system to meld a diverse population of peasants, immigrants, and Jews into the "national mass" has rusted away. And along with McDonalds, American pop music, and the Internet, late twentieth-century France also absorbed American notions of pluralism, multiculturalism, and identity politics.

Traditional French republicanism is dying. It is now the ideal of France as a mosaic of ethnic groups, so alien and repulsive to the old school, that enjoys increasingly wide support. What will these changes mean for French Jewry? A certain number of Jews prominent in the great, traditional institutions of the state and higher learning—the type that Birnbaum calls *les juifs d'état*, or "state Jews"—have angrily denounced the changes and clung for dear life to the sinking republican ideal. The intellectuals Chantal Benayoun and Dominique Schnapper (who is Raymond Aron's daughter) have gone so far as to call Jewish leaders "counter-revolutionaries" for advocating a greater public presence for the Jewish community. Other Jews have emerged as leading advocates of absolute secularism in the school system, defending the expulsion of students who openly manifest their religious beliefs, for instance by wearing a yarmulke or a Muslim headscarf.

PIERRE BIRNBAUM TAKES much the same stance, but with greater sympathy for the arguments on the other side, and more in sorrow than in anger. "There seems to have been an effort," he writes, "orchestrated from on high, to redefine French Jews as a community apart.... Jews now find themselves relegated to an imaginary community not by those who once reviled them but by those who were formerly their most zealous defenders." He counts up uses of the phrase "Jewish community," as if each one amounted to another block in a symbolic ghetto wall. "The increasing democratization and gradual Americanization of French society," he declaims, "may ... have devastating implications for the destiny of French Jews .... Jews may come to occupy a less central place in the French imagination .... [and] will increasingly figure as one of many 'ethnic,' religious, linguistic or regional minorities."

Birnbaum hyperbolically concludes that French Jews are doing nothing less than retreating from modernity. His lamentation has a certain power, but when he follows his logic to such an extreme, he loses hold of reality. Is France really on the point of breaking into a collection of self-ghettoized minorities? In a huge irony, even as the ideal of a diverse and pluralistic France has been gaining acceptance, the reality of such a dispensation is fast disappearing: under the pressure of social and economic forces originating well outside their borders, the French are becoming more alike than ever before. The dramatic developments that we call "globalization" are melting the French into a single mass more effectively than the Republic could ever have done. Already, regional differences in language and custom, so visible a century ago, have almost disappeared, while one immigrant group after another, with the important exception of North African Arabs, has fulfilled the abbé Grégoire's hopes and been entirely assimilated. Identity politics, in France at least, is more a desperate reaction against this relentless homogenization than a resurgence of real, intractable, and threatening differences. It is useful in this context to recall, as Paula Hyman does, the old characterization of modern Jews as "reverse Marranos": on the outside they protest their difference; on the inside they are the same as anyone else.

IF FRANCE DOES end up "Americanized," surely the real danger faced by French Jews will not be "communitarization," as Birnbaum puts it, but rather the same danger faced by American Jews, namely disappearance. More than half of French Jews marry non-Jews, and the rise of Jewish identity politics lamented by Birnbaum has done nothing to reverse this trend. It is also hard to see why the place of the Jews in a more pluralistic France would be marginal. Hyman concludes, more convincingly, and in diametrical opposition to Birnbaum, that "as France becomes increasingly multicultural and multiethnic at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the history of French Jewry moves from the margins to the center." And isn't it the essence of pluralism to efface, or at the very least to blur, the distinction between the center and the margins?

Birnbaum believes the Jews were central to French life because they were central to French republicanism. In the final analysis, however, it is hard to resist the conclusion that this centrality has itself been something of a myth: a myth embraced by Jews and anti-Semites alike, and so all the more powerful—but a myth nonetheless. French Jews have been an extraordinarily successful, extraordinarily visible, and extraordinarily vilified minority; but they have been also a very small minority. They have never comprised much more than one percent of the population.

The Jews in France have never achieved anything close to the influence of the Jews in America. They have loomed larger in the French imagination than in French reality, and even in the French imagination, the fever rises only at certain times, and in certain areas of the political spectrum. Today the Jews of France face a real danger, but it is not the danger that they will fall from a privileged place at the heart of French politics and culture into the narrow confines of a self-erected ghetto. It is the danger, shared by Jewish communities throughout the western world, that with anti-Semitism at a historical nadir, and acceptance by the gentile world easier to come by and more sincere than ever, and material attractions all around, their very success will accomplish, in the most peaceful, banal, and harmless of ways, what Drumont and Vichy never could. ■

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Seducer

WHAT EXPLAINS "McCain chic"? The commentariat's theory of the moment is that John McCain is to Bill Clinton what Jimmy Carter was to Richard Nixon. As *Washington Post* columnist E.J. Dionne Jr. recently put it, the Arizona senator embodies "the desire to cleanse politics of the stain of the Clinton scandals." But, even assuming Dionne is right and the public really is thirsting for an anti-Clinton (if you don't want to assume that, turn to page six for Sean Wilentz's argument against "Clinton fatigue"), why is McCain that man? After all, he's running in a field full of candidates vying to be the anti-Clinton. In fact, when George W. Bush and Bill Bradley were up, that's what the press called them. Why has McCain claimed the mantle?

OF COURSE, THERE'S McCAIN'S WAR record and his genuinely anti-Clintonian history of self-sacrifice. But personal narratives don't tell themselves—ask Bob Dole, who had a war record as gripping as McCain's and couldn't (or wouldn't) use it to define his candidacy. As important as the story McCain has to tell has been his ability to tell it—an ability that is strikingly, yes, Clintonian.

McCAIN, LIKE CLINTON, IS A SEDUCER. In fact, the two men have seduced many of the same reporters (see the collected works of *The New Yorker*'s Joe Klein). And they do it the same way: with a preternatural passion (and talent) for gabbing. Sure, McCain pokes fun at Clinton's speechifying. But the endless conversations on the McCain bus are this year's version of the famous Clinton bull sessions. And McCain's Senate detractors say the same things as Clinton's: that he prefers speech to action, that he blows beautiful hot air and never gets anything done.

AND IT'S NOT JUST THE AMOUNT OF speech; it's the content. McCain, like Clinton (and unlike Dole or, say, Bradley), is at home in a confessional culture. Both revel in private disclosure. (Although, of course, Clinton tried to shut the door once it threatened his presidency.) Clinton's 1992 riffs about his underwear and his rocky marriage were, at the time, groundbreaking. But this year McCain has set an entirely new standard. His masterful tell-all memoir about his life as a POW was just the beginning. During the endless hours spent with reporters on his campaign bus, which has been said to resemble a "24-hour Webcam," McCain essentially puts himself on the national couch. It's not just straight talk, it's straight id—an endless series of stream-of-consciousness reflections. He chats about taking melatonin, his wife's anxieties about his presidential bid, his divorce, his hatred of his pet chicken, his adoption of his daughter Bridget, his animus toward Leonardo DiCaprio. During several weeks on the bus, I never heard him declare any subject off-limits. These self-revelations deliver what reporters, and indeed many voters, crave: emotional accessibility. Sure, reporters don't call it that. They write about McCain's "authenticity" or his "break from politics as usual." But it boils down to the same thing.

THOUGH THEY SEE CLINTON'S FAR milder self-disclosures as evidence of generational decline, McCain's conservative boosters look past this side of him. *The Weekly Standard*'s David Brooks has described McCain as the "anti-boomer," entirely devoid of narcissism: "The candidate doesn't need to make up heroic rites of passage about the day he headed off to school. Instead, he describes almost every issue as a conflict between sacrifice, which is what the World War II experience now symbolizes, and immediate gratification, which is what Woodstock and yuppiedom symbolize." Sure, McCain's war record is inspiring, and, yes, it kept him far from Woodstock and the tumult of the 1960s. But, in his willingness to emote and to reveal, McCain is every bit the boomer. He shares with Clinton a generational style that distinguishes them both from all the presidents who came before.

McCAIN IS SIMILAR TO CLINTON IN another way as well. Like Clinton, he brilliantly captures the spirit of '60s reformism while steering clear of its substance. In 1992, the Clinton campaign endlessly broadcast that picture of a young Clinton shaking John F. Kennedy's hand. McCain also claims the Kennedy mantle, and he sometimes sounds shockingly like RFK. Here's a snippet from the stump: "When those young people tell me there are no great causes left in the world, I say everyplace there's a veteran without care, there's a great cause; everyplace there's a senior without a shelter, there's a great cause; everyplace there's a hungry child, there's a great cause." He wants, he says, to inspire young people "to serve causes greater than their own self-interest." It's rousing stuff.

BUT SACRIFICE FOR WHAT, EXACTLY? McCain, like Clinton, talks about sacrifice—in part because calling for sacrifice makes candidates sound noble. That's part of what made Clinton's micro-initiatives (v-chips, school uniforms, etc.) so appealing. They suggested a new government discipline but, in reality, asked little of adults while appealing to their moralism about kids. McCain's agenda is similarly modest. The centerpiece of his "great crusade," the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform bill, is a rather small rack on which to hang such lofty rhetoric. The legislation was fairly limited to begin with, and it has been so whittled down over the years that some hard-line campaign finance reformers have abandoned it as meaningless.

ON MOST OTHER ISSUES, McCAIN ALSO seems content to leave things as they are. He would keep to the Clintonian path of fiscal conservatism and free trade. On social issues, he clearly has no interest in stirring up controversy. Ask him about health care, education, or even abortion, and he's likely to tell you to wait until campaign finance reform purges special interests from the process, allowing the rational people in the political center to hammer out a compromise. It's hard to see where the public sacrifice comes in.

IN FACT, BOTH CLINTON AND McCAIN are really co-opters. They specialize in siphoning off the passion from truly radical crusades while simultaneously signaling that they pose no deep threat to the status quo. Clinton did it vis-à-vis left-liberalism. In a time of recession, he tapped into the left's long-frustrated desire for a government willing to act against the market's brutalities. But, once in office, he focused on reducing the deficit instead. McCain may be doing the same to the populist crusades of the 1990s. He speaks the "government is corrupt" language of Ross Perot and Jerry Brown, but, unlike his predecessors, he doesn't envision his process reforms leading to policies much different from those in place today.

LACKING, AS IT DOES, MUCH IN THE way of domestic policy, McCain's campaign ends up resting largely on a tautology: "Vote for John McCain. He is John McCain." Even his aides will tell you they hope this election comes down to character—and it's hard to imagine a more narcissistic platform, even from Clinton.

FRANKLIN FOER

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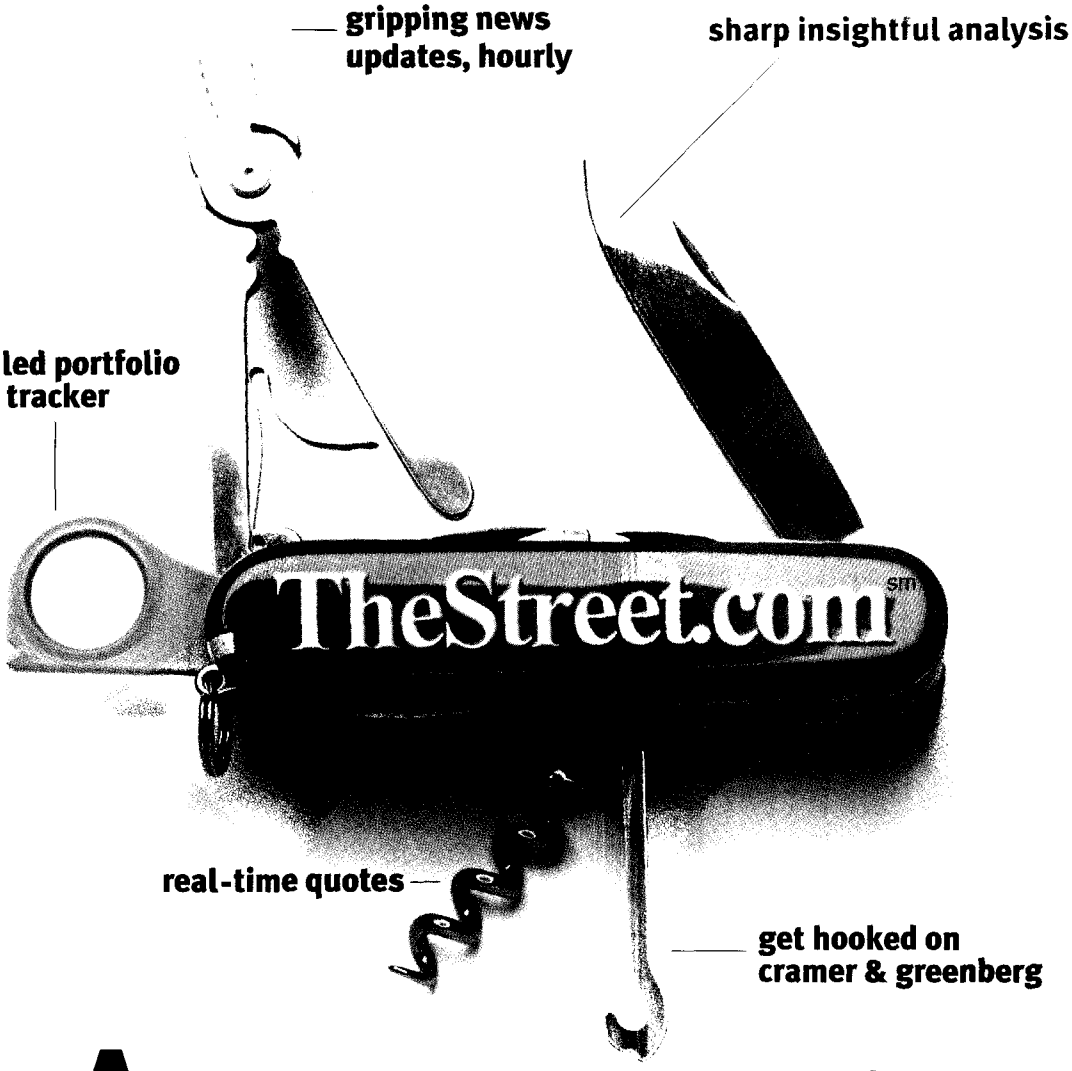

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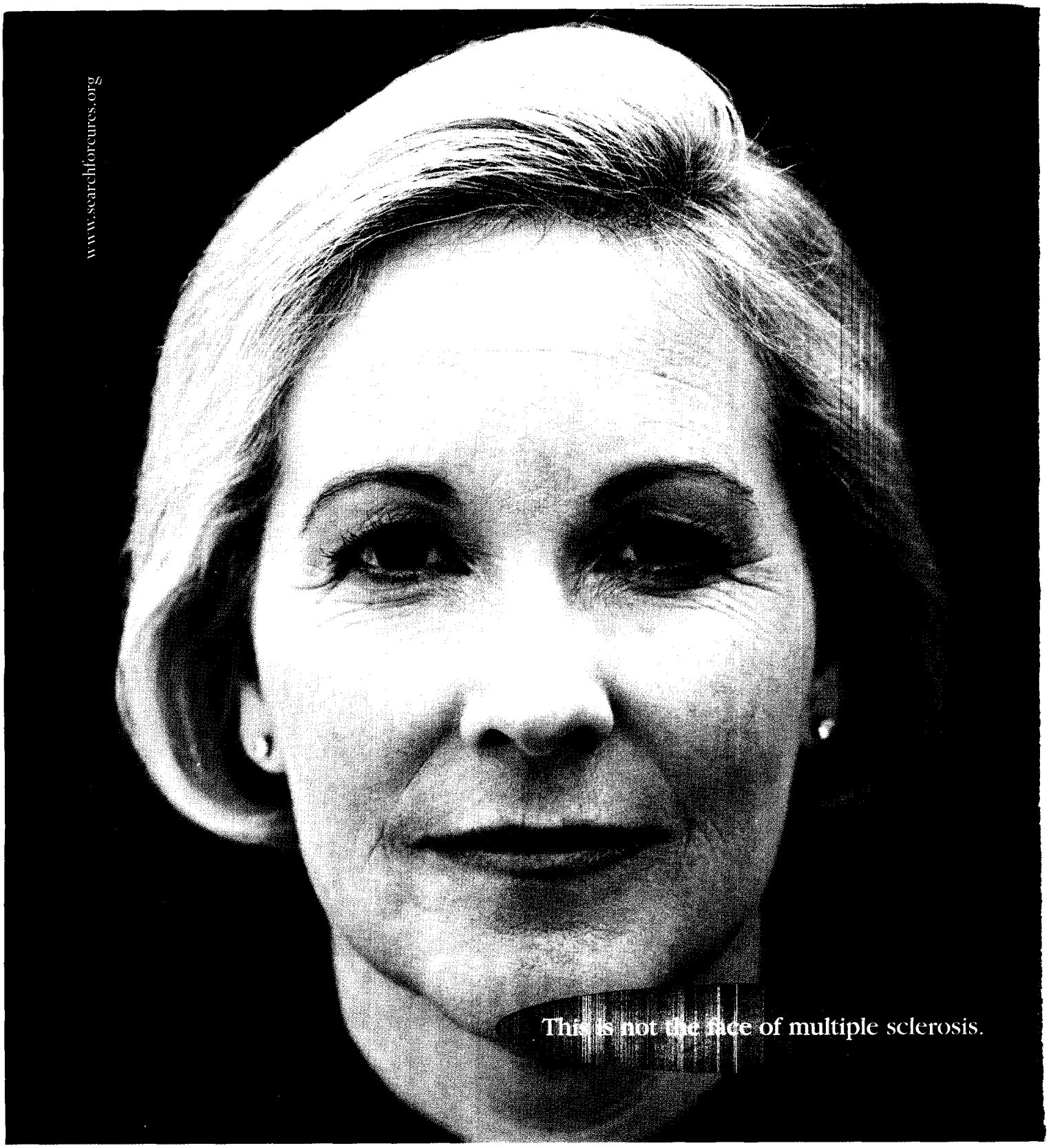

It's the face of Connie Pierce. She's married to her high school sweetheart, has twin daughters and a job she loves. She has also been fighting multiple sclerosis (MS) for a decade. She credits family support, a sense of humor and advances in medicines from America's pharmaceutical companies with helping to dramatically slow the progression of her MS. Pharmaceutical company researchers continue to make breakthroughs and won't stop until there's a cure. So people like Connie can live and love and laugh for years to come.

America's Pharmaceutical Companies

Leading the way in the search for cures

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